

Kirill Malyutin
Tuomo Mäntynen

USE OF THE INTERNET IN LUXURY TRAVEL BUSINESS AT RENSHAW TRAVEL

Bachelor's Thesis
Business Management


December 2013



MIKKELIN AMMATTIKORKEAKOULU

Mikkeli University of Applied Sciences

DESCRIPTION

 <p>MIKKELIN AMMATTIKORKEAKOULU Mikkeli University of Applied Sciences</p>		Date of the bachelor's thesis 09.12.2013
Author(s) Kirill Malyutin, Tuomo Mäntynen	Degree programme and option Degree in Business Management Bachelor of Business Administration	
Name of the bachelor's thesis Use of the Internet in luxury travel business at Renshaw Travel		
Abstract <p>The main objective of the research was to find out and analyze the most suitable and most profitable online sources for Renshaw Travel to promote its services on the Internet. Nowadays, it is quite essential to have the same good visibility and presence both in the offline (real) and online worlds. The right use of the Internet is crucial for a luxury travel agency, especially for the company like Renshaw Travel.</p> <p>The thesis consists of several parts, which are logically divided to create one whole picture. First of all, it was necessary to find and study the theoretical framework, in order to apply this knowledge in practice. In theoretical part the most important components of the industry were reviewed and studied, i.e. tourism, hospitality, luxury travel business, in particular, the profile of Vancouver, since it is the company's location. Internet marketing related aspects were reviewed and studied as well, for example, marketing as interaction via social media, defining a market and setting a price, tools of social media, and entertainment aspect of Internet marketing.</p> <p>The empirical part includes the description of Renshaw Travel and its DNA, in particular, as well as its online presence and visibility. As important components of the company's DNA, Renshaw Travel's partners and competitors are represented.</p> <p>The research data was gathered by the data collection methods. For this purpose the Internet was required and used at full capacity. The research involved the method of contacting and interviewing Renshaw Travel specialists to receive the primary data. In this part social media were practiced to find out their online "power" in marketing purposes. The research part also included Renshaw Travel website's analysis, as well as the partners' and competitors' presence, visibility and activities in the online world. Thorough results were presented during this research and analysis. As the final piece of this part SWOT analysis has been conducted.</p> <p>Conclusions were provided as a summary with some specific recommendations for Renshaw Travel. Followed by concluding remarks with some essential points to express, the conclusions part has become the visible results of this thesis, concerning the use of the Internet in luxury travel business by Renshaw Travel.</p>		
Subject headings, (keywords) Internet marketing, social media, luxury travel, DNA, interaction, tourism, hospitality, industry, SWOT, research, analysis, online presence and visibility, quality, experience, unique, Vancouver		
Pages 147+6 Appendices	Language English	URN
Remarks, notes on appendices Appendices include different lists of questions, prepared for and sent to Renshaw Travel, its partners and competitors. In addition to the above mentioned, a list of separate questions and some statistics can be found there as well.		
Tutor Markku Järvinen	Employer of the bachelor's thesis Renshaw Travel	

CONTENTS

1 INTRODUCTION	1
2 INDUSTRY PROFILE	2
2.1 Luxury travel business.....	2
2.2 Tourism	5
2.2.1 Classification of tourism	7
2.2.2 Benchmarking in tourism	11
2.2.3 Tourism “behind the scene”	15
2.3 Hospitality industry	17
2.4 Vancouver profile.....	18
3 INTERNET MARKETING IN TRAVEL BUSINESS	19
3.1 Marketing as interaction via social media	21
3.1.1 Marketing styles in social media	22
3.1.2 Reasons for social media marketing and customer feedback.....	24
3.1.3 Internet as a salesperson	25
3.1.4 Optimizing the online content.....	26
3.1.5 Inbound and outbound marketing	31
3.2 Tips on defining a market and setting a price.....	32
3.2.1 Defining a market.....	33
3.2.2 Pricing luxury travel service.....	35
3.3 Tools of social media	36
3.4 Viral marketing.....	42
3.5 Entertainment in Internet marketing.....	43
4 RENSHAW TRAVEL PRACTICES AND VALUES.....	45
4.1 Renshaw Travel’s DNA	45
4.1.1 Industry accreditation	56
4.1.2 Renshaw Travel’s Competitors in luxury travel business	59
4.2 Renshaw Travel’s online presence and visibility	65
5 RESULTS OF THE RESEARCH	79
5.1 Social media networks in practice	80
5.2 Commercial radius of Renshaw Travel	86
5.2.1 Followers and their relevance to the company’s success	88

5.2.2 Inbound and outbound-based marketing strategies in use (two-way advertising)	91
5.3 Renshaw Travel website's analysis	91
5.4 Importance of the Internet in everyday operations for Renshaw Travel	95
5.4.1 Renshaw Travel's interaction with customers	96
5.4.2 The partners' interaction with customers and online visibility	103
5.4.3 The competitors' interaction with customers and online visibility	123
5.4.4 Customer satisfaction	131
5.5 SWOT analysis of Renshaw Travel	133
6 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR RENSHAW TRAVEL	135
7 CONCLUDING REMARKS	137
8 BIBLIOGRAPHY	139

APPENDICES

1 INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, in the world of rapidly developing technologies, growing influence of the Internet and importance of time and service, fierce and tough competition is taking place. Companies struggle to get their share of the market and to remain not only visible, but viable to be able to continue their operations. Global trends often set high standards and sophisticated demands, which must be met by companies to satisfy their customers and consumers. What comes to luxury travel, it is clear that this market is constantly developing, expanding and setting certain expectations. Therefore, travel agencies and / or companies involved into this business are facing constant pressure from their competitors and partly from their customers, which are influencing trends in the industry.

This particular thesis is dedicated to the travel agency operating in the city of Vancouver, in the province of British Columbia, Canada. The company is called Renshaw Travel. This is a family business, which is maintained by all members of the family and which already has its history. Renshaw Travel has its own values, high standards and principles of operation. However, in the contemporary world of fierce competition there is an absolute need to keep the leading position in luxury travel business, and, since the Internet is now extremely important, the necessity to know and understand the most reliable, profitable and visible social media is crucial.

This thesis is going to comprise several different aspects, which are supposed to help to understand the reality of luxury travel business, its difficulties, specifics, influences and factors, which “set the tone” of the industry. We need to get an idea of how all the involved stakeholders influence and have certain impact on Renshaw Travel’s way of running the business. This should help us to understand the trends that force the company to adapt its operations to the current demands of the market, which consists of the customers, consumers, other related industries, competitors and some other factors.

The main objective of the this bachelor’s thesis is to find out the best suitable online sources for Renshaw Travel to keep its leading position in luxury travel business and remain viable and visible in a decade with evolving online world and rapidly changing demands. Basically we are going to discover which of the online sources bring more customers to the company and which bring less. Thus, if there is a problem of lack of traffic to those sources, we can try

to explore it. Understanding the most useful ones for Renshaw Travel is crucial, since the Internet plays a very important role in people's lives and also in business in general. Therefore, our aim is to study and learn which of the online sources are widely used by the company, by the company's competitors, which bring more customers to Renshaw Travel and also hypothesis on future relevance of the above mentioned sources.

In order to reach the desired objective, we have formulated the following research questions:

1. What is the general situation in luxury travel business market?
2. What are the major means of Internet marketing?
3. What online sources are the most profitable and essential for Renshaw Travel and how should they be utilized by the company?

The further research is aimed at finding out the background of the company's operation and key data required for understanding and correct analysis of the current situation and estimations of future use of the mentioned social media. For the thesis we are going to use different sources, i.e. read through books and articles, related to the subject, browse many websites, required for comparison and gathering the data, have online interviews in order to get the needed information, and also use some Finnish books and translate the quotes, which are to be used.

2 INDUSTRY PROFILE

Obviously, it is always required to study the industry, in which a company is operating, before making any judgments, decisions, statements or analysis. It is necessary to understand how the structure has been created and what has been the major motivator for the industry. Theoretical framework is supposed to help and guide in the research, as well as to provide with a solid background for the studies.

2.1 Luxury travel business

When talking about luxury travel business, it is good to know what the term "luxury" really means. "Luxury" is explained as a "material object, service, etc., conducive to sumptuous living, usually a delicacy, elegance, or refinement of living rather than a necessity" (Random House Inc., 2013). Another online dictionary describes "luxury" as "something inessential but

conductive to pleasure and comfort, something expensive or hard to obtain, sumptuous living or surroundings” (Houghton Mifflin Company Dictionary, 2009). Definitely, there are more definitions to the term but the basic explanation leads to a description of something “extra”, something “not necessary but desirable”. This concept involves the idea of spending more money to satisfy one’s own wishes.

Reasonably, now it makes sense to define the term “luxury travel”. As per some websites, the term is defined in different ways, but it does include the idea of “uniqueness”, “privacy”, “experience”, “special attention” and as not being the “mass market”. This all comprises the idea of a customized service with special attention to customer’s needs and wishes, excitement and exclusiveness with something to remember afterwards. Obviously, travel agents must have certain expertise to be able to communicate with consumers to have a common understanding of the required luxury service (Cox, 2011).

Despite the massive use of the Internet, a great emphasis is made on face-to-face contact, when it comes to luxury travel. Luxury clients are most of the times willing to have everything planned for them, so that the company can figure out the most suitable offer for its customers. This is essential to understand to be able to communicate with your clientele, to forecast the future of the market and also to be able to be unique for the customers.

As for the meaning of “luxury” for customers, the aspect of experience is strongly emphasized. This aspect also includes the idea of quality based on so-called “investment” in yourself and experiencing uniqueness. And quality is quite often associated with expensiveness, “but they don’t necessarily have to go hand in hand – sensual experience, a massage, a wonderful dinner, travel, a retreat, something very special you do for yourself” (Danziger 2005, 20). It also has the comprised meaning of something you were not able to afford but now you are because you have money for that. And this idea is also supported by the provided (in the appendix) statistics by Statistics Canada (Statistics Canada, 2011). The official website belongs to the government of Canada and all the data is trustful. Thus, we can make sure that, despite the crisis occurred in 2008, Canadians did not change their habits, nor did they stop spending their budget on themselves. It is really great in terms of the industry in general. It is quite important to understand where actually luxury travel is located in the Maslow’s Hierarchy of needs. It is a need for self-actualization; thus, it shows that people want to maximize their potential, widen their knowledge, enlarge their experience regardless the cost. The desired

experience is valued more than most of their expenses. Some of the countries are particularly more visited during the past years meanwhile the others keep the same stable dynamics. This is a positive factor for luxury travel and tourism in general. If people are willing to travel, they are also willing to bring back good emotions, nice memories and the feeling of being valued and treated accordingly.

It is considered that an official birth of “new” luxury is year 1984 during Ronald Reagan’s presidency. As known, Mrs. Reagan was willing to spend huge amounts of money on expensive and extravagant celebrations, clothes, and everything that surrounded her. This is considered as a push-factor for the new luxury. However, luxury travel business itself increased considerably somewhere between 2002 and 2003, even despite 9/11, which affected a large number of industries in the world. Perhaps, there were emotions, which made people seek something positive, good memories or a feeling of safety and, thus, rushing into irrational, at first sight, expenses. Certainly, this “boom” in luxury travel gave the industry a new perspective in the following decade.

Luxury travel is related to the category of the “experiential luxuries” (Danziger 2005, 52); however, it is worth mentioning that the term “luxury” means something more than just experience. Which words can be used to describe the term? As stated earlier, beside “experience”, “unique”, “quality”, “exclusive”, and “privileged”, we can definitely say that it is also something that exceeds our expectations, something “not ordinary”, “beyond the basics”, or “special”. There are more words to define the term, but the main idea here is that “luxury” is not something typical or something that is in the mass market, it is more personal to each and every consumer. Therefore, what applies to luxury travel business, it is the satisfaction of a consumer’s wants, ability to meet and also forecast and exceed his or her expectations and desires, making the service fast, easy and pleasant. According to the study made by Leaf Van Boven and Thomas Gilovich, “the good life”, in other words, for luxury consumers it is better to live “by doing things than by having things” (Danziger 2005, 34), which proves that people pay special attention to luxury travel nowadays.

What is typical for luxury travel is that so-called “luxury-travelers” “fly with the masses but vacation with the classes” (Danziger 2005, 149). This basically means that they can purchase a simple flight to the desired destination, but they are willing to stay in a luxury hotel and enjoy all luxury services offered. Therefore, we can also define some kind of a priority even within

luxury travel. On the one hand, luxury consumers purchase a whole luxury package, including the first class flight. On the other hand, there are luxury consumers, which prefer to purchase the core of luxury travel, something that brings more or even best luxury experience. They consider a flight as a short and unimportant part of total experience. This was one of the reasons for cheap airline companies to appear and succeed in their businesses. As a matter of fact, it is crucial to realize this tendency and luxury consumer behavior to keep this kind of business profitable.

In addition, there is a good point about luxury consumers. Since luxury is constantly changing, evolving, it is clear that luxury consumers reach a certain level, when this feeling of something special vanishes and there is a need to seek a new luxury level, a new feeling. Thus, we can conclude that whatever concerns luxury, luxury lifestyle, luxury travel, luxury furniture, anything, it is about an everlasting change and movement of this “level” of luxury. Whatever is considered as luxury soon becomes a normal, everyday, routine thing. Therefore, a strong need to replace the same feeling of luxury gets into the game. It should be taken into consideration when planning new luxury travel for the same consumers, or even if it is another year. People tend to observe and monitor the global demand and they know what they deserve. Accordingly, it is extremely important for any luxury travel business to set high standards and be capable to provide even higher than the stated standards to stay viable throughout life.

2.2 Tourism

In luxury travel business it is essential to know and understand the concept of tourism itself. First of all, it is necessary to have a definition of tourism, which is “the act of traveling of people for other than their normal work” (Mathur 2007, 1). Another definition, according to World Tourism Organization, states that tourism is “the movement of people away from their normal place of residence and work for a period of not less than 24 hours and not more than one year” (Bisht, Belwal, Pande 2010, 26). This definition is broader and comprises more precise time limits for this concept.

Secondly, it is important to realize why people need, like and do tourism. Obviously, they seek leisure and different recreational purposes to escape from their day-to-day routine and enjoy themselves. It might be also some cultural needs, such as an intention to discover the

world around and bring back some good memories. For some, it is a new experience of a lifetime, which can be repeated as often as possible.

On the other hand, tourism may be a job for somebody. People host different TV-shows, publish magazines, and write articles, in other words, explore the world for those, who are not able to travel due to certain reasons. But it also can be business travels, such as signing contracts in special atmosphere or visiting places for potential clients. In case of luxury travel, such tourism may be a chance to check the most appropriate and desirable destinations for customers. There are many different reasons for tourism and they are all equally important. But it is crucial to realize that it is a rapidly growing and changing industry, which does not include only luxury consumers, but each and every willing and capable to travel person.

Definitely, tourism as an industry, especially in developed countries, “is making greater use of partnership arrangements” (Ball, Jameson 2004, 53); thus, it creates a “network”. The concept of the “network” is crucial for some industries, or even countries. This tight co-operation helps industries to work together and benefit from mutual trust, assistance, and, in a way, promotion. In any case, most of the industries are related or even connected with each other, so it makes sense to make use of that rather than just competing with industries, which are not your rivals. Working together they can increase a service level, improve understanding between each other and start operating as one good mechanism without any delays, failures or halting. When industries reach this co-operation and work as one, they accomplish strong competitive advantage.

The above described objective is supplemented by a definition of tourism network, which is “a set of formal, co-operative relationships between organizations and individuals to achieve a particular purpose within the tourism sector that may result in qualitative and/or quantitative benefits of a learning and exchange, business activity, and/or community nature relative to building profitable tourism destinations” (Ball, Jameson 2004, 54).

What comes to tourism itself, it is worth mentioning that it can be divided into “outbound” and “inbound” tourism. Outbound tourism means one business if going to another place, for example, state, province or country. Inbound tourism comprises the meaning of tourists coming to any place from other parts of the world, for instance, this type means tourists coming to Vancouver.

It is also necessary to speak about different sectors of tourism, i.e. accommodation, recreation and entertainment, food and beverage services, transportation, and travel services. There is an unlimited potential for each one of them, while there is mostly a positive impact on other industries. Definitely, any tourism has its pros and cons, because every industry influences one another with positive or negative consequences.

Tourism involves in at least several different industries, for example, people need to travel to a desired destination; they need cars, planes, trains, ships, or any other means of transportation. On the other hand, there is a question about what tourists are going to eat during their trip, and this involves food and beverage services. Definitely, this is not everything that is connected with tourism. We can also speak about cultural side of any trip, for example, sight-seeing tours, museums, parades, theaters, etc. Moreover, there is a clear need of security in any trip, and this is another huge aspect, which is involved. Basically, tourism is extremely diverse in its influence and relation to other industries.

Nowadays, more emphasis is made on quality instead of quantity, i.e. it is more important how long tourists stay, how much money they spend, how satisfied they are during and especially after the trip. It also gives another clear advantage, which is “word-of-mouth”. Tourists get back to their home countries and share their emotions, memories and excitement with relatives, friends, acquaintances; thus, they somehow “send friends off to experience the same thing – which provides continuing business for the destination” (Mathur 2007, 4). This proves that it is truly essential to aim at a better quality of your service and keep consumers loyal.

Obviously, “word-of-mouth” can sometimes work against a company, or even a whole industry. Negative rumors, experience or simply opinions may destroy or harm one’s reputations, especially when it concerns such industries, in which there is a strong and tough competition.

2.2.1 Classification of tourism

As any industry, tourism is not solely an industry, in which people just do one particular thing, i.e. travel without any specific intention; there is something more behind that. To understand those differences and specifics better, and deepen into the broad variety of consumers’ choices, preferences and needs, we must classify tourism as the following types:

- ➔ Adventure tourism
- ➔ Eco-tourism
- ➔ Pilgrimage tourism
- ➔ Medical tourism
- ➔ Cultural tourism
- ➔ Heritage tourism

Adventure tourism

Adventure tourism is basically involving the element of exploration or travel into the unexpected. It is a very attractive industry with a growing demand among tourists. It is very different from ordinary type of tourism; moreover, it might be quite risky and take a lot of physical and mental efforts. It is very exciting, and that is the reason of this type of tourism being so popular.

This type of tourism involves a cultural aspect as well, because being in another environment also means getting familiar with a new culture and sharing your own; thus, having a cultural exchange. Beside the mentioned aspect, tourists have a chance to engage with nature and enjoy the experience.

As examples of adventure tourism some activities can be named, such as mountaineering expeditions, trekking, rock climbing, and others. Basically, any ordinary tourism activity, which involves something more than just typical everyday things, can be classified as adventure tourism, either this is diving or climbing, rafting or canoeing, or anything else.

Eco-tourism

Eco-tourism has its focus mainly on wilderness adventures, where tourists have a chance to learn and appreciate our planet, to be more responsible and compassionate. This type of tourism is “defined as travel to destinations where the flora, fauna, and cultural heritage are the primary attractions” (Mathur 2007, 7).

The providers of hospitality for “eco-tourists” are not only concerned about positive cultural experience and understanding of the human-beings’ impact on the environment, but also promoting “recycling, energy efficiency, water re-use, and the creation of economic opportunities for local communities” (Mathur 2007, 8).

This type of tourism is the fastest growing due to many reasons. One of them perhaps is consumers’ desire to get some exotics, to explore the unexplored and to challenge themselves in a way that they could feel better.

Pilgrimage tourism

Pilgrim tourism is about searching for spiritual or moral significance; it is about one’s beliefs and faith. The most appropriate destination for this kind of tourism is India. Lots of pilgrims travel there to find themselves, the answers, to purify, or they go there for any other reason. Perhaps, for ordinary tourists it is a brand new and totally different experience, which cannot be obtained in typical for tourists’ destinations.

Obviously, it is good to know what the term “pilgrimage” actually means to be able to understand market’s trends. According to an online source, the term “pilgrimage” means “a journey, especially a long one, made to some sacred place as an act of religious devotion” (Random house Inc., 2013) .

Speaking about pilgrimage places, to which tourists travel, we can distinguish temples, mosques, gurudwaras, and churches. With this information travel agencies are capable to analyze the market and predict forthcoming changes, demands, or influences on other industries.

Medical tourism

This is a very interesting type of tourism. Medical tourism can be defined as a travel to foreign countries for a specialized treatment. Definitely, this involves more than just treatment; it involves all kinds of medical care (required for a consumer), proven and quite high level of safety of healthcare in chosen for this purpose destinations, and also different attractions of the country.

Being quite affordable, this type of tourism is becoming more and more popular. Moreover, safety of healthcare in chosen foreign countries is increasing; therefore, it makes such market more attractive and reliable. The quality of healthcare is not worse than in consumers' home countries, but the costs are significantly lower. Besides, good exchange rate is positively influences on growth of the industry.

Cultural tourism

Cultural tourism comprises the concept of the “mosaic of places, traditions, art forms, celebrations and experiences that portray the nation and its people” (Mathur 2007, 16). Basically, this means not just time you spend relaxing somewhere on the beach, or walking to some sightseeing places as part of the program; this means interest and wish to discover something new for yourself, to see another culture and compare it to your own, to deepen into the arts, to become part of celebration and to get to know more people. Such cultural experiences help nations to understand each other better and to reduce a number of wars, conflicts and simple misunderstandings.

The main focus here is on a tourist's desire to accept new things and to go onwards to see new culture; this is based on a volunteer approach of openness. This type of tourism is becoming more and more popular especially in Europe, since small distances allow people to travel more often.

Heritage tourism

Heritage tourism comprises visiting historical or industrial sites in a place of destination. This may include railroads, both in use and abandoned, old canals, battlefields, castles, abandoned theaters, etc. Tourists do not even imagine how much they have unseen and unexplored. This particular type of tourism helps them not only to see it all, but to feel it as well.

In heritage tourism places and sites differ from country to country, but the main idea to show people the world's heritage and to try to make them appreciate it. This type of tourism is unpredictable due to modern technologies and especially the Internet. Real trips can be easily replaced by online virtual tours, in which potential tourists can see the places of interest. This is something that shaping the industry, because it makes it a little more difficult to attract that segment of market, which is oriented at the online world. However, it is hardly possible that

heritage tourism is going to be replaced by the Internet, because people still seek real feelings, real excitement and real experience.

The above mentioned types of tourism help us to understand consumers' possible needs and desires. Knowing this classification is crucial for travel agencies, because this knowledge provides them with essential information, which may fit consumers' wishes. It is important to choose the most appropriate type of leisure activity for each individual customer; in other words, travel agencies are able to find a perfect match for their clients.

2.2.2 Benchmarking in tourism

Benchmarking is a very essential part to speak about. As a matter of fact, there are many different definitions of benchmarking, and all of them basically point out at one major idea of improvement and better performance. But to be more precise, it is required to take a look at some of the best definitions.

Here are the most appropriate definitions, concerning benchmarking (Wober 2002, 1-2):

- Benchmarking is a continuous systematic process for evaluating the products, services and work of organizations that are recognized as representing best practices for the purpose of organizational improvement (Spendolini, 1992);
- Benchmarking is a continuous search for, and application of, significantly better practices that lead to a superior competitive performance (Watson, 1993);
- Benchmarking is a disciplined process that begins with a thorough search to identify best-practice-organizations, continues with the careful study of one's own practices and performance, progresses through systematic site visits and interviews, and concludes with an analysis of results, development of recommendations and implementation (Garvin, 1993);
- Benchmarking is an external focus on internal activities, functions, or operations in order to achieve continuous improvement (McNair and Leibdried, 1992).

These definitions help us to understand the core idea of benchmarking and why it is really necessary to have it as an important component of a company's practices. The result of benchmarking is the achievement of constant and lasting improvement. It is the core meas-

urement, which brings the company on the right track on its way to a better performance and competitive advantage.

Benchmarking is not yet a clear concept in tourism as a service industry; however, it is widely used in marketing, finance, quality, and technology innovation as in the manufacturing industry. It is quite understandable, because the service industry is different from the manufacturing one.

There are four types of benchmarking distinguished (Wober 2002, 1-2):

- Internal benchmarking – this type is focusing on locations, divisions, units, branches within the same organization. The evaluation process involves audits, questionnaires and carried out by company management. The aim of such procedure is to improve company's programs, policy, targets, and, thus, results. It concentrates on company's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT), which leads to increasing economic efficiency of the company;
- External benchmarking – this type is more about comparison with others, i.e. other organizations regardless if it is a competitor or not.
 - The first external type is “competitive benchmarking”, in which processes are compared within the same industry. Usually, the evaluation is made by a strategic consultant using different available, including confidential, information;
 - The second external type is “best-in-class” or “best practice benchmarking”, in which the focus is on a certain management area, for example, finance, marketing, or technology. In this type companies are co-operating and sharing information and suggestions in order to improve their management systems;
 - The third external type is “sector benchmarking”, in which the main focus is on sectors, i.e. assessment of the average performance of sectors, as well as differences between individual companies. This type comprises the actions taken by industry association and their co-operation with authorities in order to maintain businesses competitive.

Undoubtedly, any of described benchmarking types needs to be applied to real processes in order to be the most effective. For thorough analysis of company's performance, i.e. financial,

technical and efficiency, which basically mean how good the company operates in its business, how productive it is, and how efficient it becomes due to employees' contribution.

This is essential to gather all data and analyze company's situation and position on the market. In order to be more competitive and strong in terms of viability, the company must be aware of its strengths as well as of its weaknesses. It is a crucial factor in a global competition. Having this information analyzed and utilized, the company can focus on its opportunities and threats to be able to compare itself with its rivals all over the world, if they are related to this particular industry.

Definitely, speaking about measures taken improve company's performance, it is necessary to distinguish between process-based and results-based measures. The following table represents differences and provides precise examples:

TABLE 1. Differences and examples of process-based and results-based measures (Wober 2002, 5).

Process-based measures	Results-based measures
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Relate to a particular process ➤ Used by people working in the process ➤ Maintained by people working in the process ➤ Provide very quick feedback on performance ➤ Visually displayed in the workplace 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Relate to broader issues or unit targets ➤ Used more as management information ➤ Data collected in workplace but analyzed and presented elsewhere ➤ Usually give retrospective results, often weekly or monthly ➤ Often too detailed to be fully communicated but "vital few" are displayed in workplace
<p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Effectiveness ✓ Efficiency ✓ Process consistency/variability ✓ Quality output level 	<p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Customer satisfaction ✓ Employee satisfaction ✓ Product performance ✓ Financial performance

This table represents two types of measures logically focusing on different aspects. The first one has its focus on process, in which the aspect of “current actions” is crucial. According to the table, it is easy to understand that the first type is mostly internal and essential for better control, maintenance and communication within the “unit”.

What comes to the second type, it focuses on results, which are reached or not reached. This type is more external and “looks back” at the past; thus, analysis of the results is a crucial element in here. Results-based measures are aimed at gathering and analyzing the data, planning on further actions, goals and strategies, making certain statements concerning performance in general.

Both types are important and should work together to be most useful for the company. In other words, there must be a harmony between them to get one whole piece of benchmarking. Having lots of ideas is simply not enough, as well as concentrating solely on process without paying attention to results. It takes time and efforts to reach some kind of balance for the company to improve its performance by implementing benchmarking in the industry.

As for benchmarking in tourism, it is classified into three categories (Wober 2002, 12):

1. Benchmarking of profit-oriented tourism businesses
2. Benchmarking of non-profit-oriented tourism businesses/organizations
3. Destination benchmarking

What comes to the first category, it comprises different aspects, such as accommodation, restaurants, airlines, various tourism related companies, agencies, etc. It is a huge part of this category and a very important one, because it is tightly connected with tourism and hospitality in general. Frankly speaking, hospitality sector or industry in general is a huge one with lots of elements comprised with it. It is a whole separate topic for discussion, but it is worth adding that benchmarking in hospitality sector has a lot in common with benchmarking in tourism sector since both industries are interrelated.

As for the second category, it consists of mostly attractions operated by public authorities. This is also a very essential direction for benchmarking, because it is one of the elements of

the industry. It required certain understanding of processes and results of performances of different institutions and businesses.

Moving on to the third category, we can discuss here local, regional or national benchmarking. This is important especially for tourism to be aware of targeted destinations, but for that it needs some analyses and conclusions with upcoming plans, goals and strategies.

Summing up benchmarking in tourism, it is crucial to understand the structure of one's actions in order to assess company's performance. Benchmarking is required to keep business "updated", to aim at constant improvements with a deep analysis of the data with significant results. Proper benchmarking in this particular industry can easily increase company's profitability and to sustain its viability as long as it operates.

2.2.3 Tourism "behind the scene"

Obviously, there is always something more behind the idea of tourism. Many companies struggle to survive in this fierce competition and find new ways to attract customers. However, while attracting new customers and offering great deals, companies still have to remain profitable to continue their operations. A certain need to be visible is quite costly in most of cases, and a "game" of the best deal is often like walking on the edge.

Travel agencies, and, thus, all companies, connected with them, for example, a travel agency and an airline company, have to co-operate in order to benefit from this kind of a deal. For instance, many travel agencies offer an "all-inclusive" package, in which you mainly get a flight to your destination, accommodation and states services. This is good for airline companies, because they can rely on certain amount of passengers, so that the plane could be loaded fully.

However, a lot of misunderstanding is yet to take place, especially when airline companies expect "no-shows" and overbook the plane intentionally. This happens because travelers often purchase good deals, when your flight is through some intermediate destinations, or when your destination is intermediate, but passengers do not require flying further. Thus, there are lots of empty seats remaining. Companies try to profit and overbook the plane. However, sometimes they get it wrong and create some not really standard situations like having two

plane tickets for just one seat for both persons. Definitely, flights through intermediate destinations are cheaper, and customers are willing to purchase them. This applies to return tickets, when the price is lower if you purchase a return ticket, but in fact, passengers not always need the second “half” of it.

Nowadays, tourism has developed to the level when it is capable of understanding the consumers’ demands, i.e. to have more or all services included, so-called “all-inclusive package”, a perception of a good deal (even though it might be a regular price but stated as a good and exclusive one), convenient timing, location, and a sense of being special for a service provider. This actually leads to a logical thought of getting close to a luxury travel level. Therefore, it gives some incentives to luxury travel to develop and “invent” new offers for consumers willing to experience luxury.

It is normal to expect a lot of different activities during a travel, and tourists “might take advantage of a range of services, attractions and facilities dependent upon the type of holiday” (Ryan 2003, 94). This statement proves that tourists are happy to exploit as many offered (and especially included) activities as possible. This is considered as a desire to get a bonus, a certain benefit, which they expect for money they paid. In addition to that, consumers expect their service providers to be competent and helpful; in other words, they want to see specialists taking care of their needs and wishes in the most appropriate and desirable way.

Another important component of tourism, as stated earlier, is security. Obviously, tourists are not showing their intention to go to those regions, where the political situation is unstable, where the crime level is high, or where there is a war taking place. There are many other criteria, based on which consumers make their decisions. As a matter of fact, tourists want to feel safe during a trip, they do not want to think it over in advance, they just want to choose the best suitable option and do not even bother themselves with extra worries. This becomes an essential part of tourism.

Accommodation is another aspect of travel, which goes hand-in-hand with tourism. The whole hospitality industry is growing the same fast as tourism itself, and has a good potential for future development. Hospitality is going to be discussed in the following part of the thesis.

2.3 Hospitality industry

Hospitality is a rapidly growing industry, tightly connected with tourism. Thousands of tourists travel around the globe, and, of course, they need a place to stay in, i.e. accommodation. For this purposes travelers choose hotels, motels, hostels, or different types of accommodation, for example, a homestay family.

Obviously, it is essential to know the meaning of “hospitality industry”, since we focus on the industry. Different online sources provide us with different definitions; however, there are some suitable ones, such as “hotels, motels, inns, or such businesses that provide transitional or short-term lodging, with or without food” (Business Dictionary) and “hospitality industry is the field that specializes in delivering services to direct customers” (Ask Encyclopedia, 2013). Some of the definitions are more precise and speak about restaurants, bars, cafés, and sometimes swimming pools as part of hospitality industry.

Nowadays, the industry evolved rapidly and demand set quite high standards, but it gave the industry basically two major directions, one of which is cheap accommodation (and in most cases convenient as a short-term or transitional), i.e. motels, hostels, 2-star hotels, and the other one is standard or more expensive accommodation, i.e. 4- and 5-star hotels, cottage houses, apartments, etc.

Despite the differences, all of the above mentioned ways of accommodations are provided to ensure that customers can spend an enjoyable time with a maximum level of comfort. Customer feedback is very important for such businesses, because they are quite vulnerable to the external influences, and especially negative “word-of-mouth”.

Hospitality as an industry fits far not everyone. People working in this particular industry “need the ability to provide immediate responses to unique guest requests and they must have good interpersonal skills” (Jayawardena, Teare 2004, 6). It is not a secret that employees often face a huge pressure from the day-to-day routine, from the management, and from customers, which are officially called as “guests”.

Hospitality industry is a compound structure, in which all components must work perfectly well. Failure in one of the departments easily leads to failure in the general structure, which

leads to decay of the company's image. Employees are assigned different tasks with strict time limits; any sub-ordinance may lead to conflicts or worse. This also means that employees need to have "the necessary knowledge, skills and abilities to perform the task and also be interactively skilled" (Jayawardena, Teare 2004, 8).

The process of recruiting and selecting new employees might take long. In order to find the best possible candidate within given time limits managers put their efforts on interviews, trying to estimate the potential employee. Once the right person is found, he or she is going through the process of training. During that period the main aim is to teach the person all the required skills he or she might lack or needs to refresh, and also to teach and somehow integrate company's values. This is essential for the company to have employees with strong morals and well educated in order not only to handle different situations and be polite with customers, but to stand the pressure occurring from time to time. In addition to that, there is a need to assign each employee to the correct position, where this person fits best and can perform his or her tasks with maximum efficiency and effectiveness (Diffen). Therefore, appropriate staffing is one of the core components in this business, because the company should be capable to handle significant uncertainty and variability in the service production process.

2.4 Vancouver profile

In this particular thesis it is necessary to speak about the city, which there is a major focus on, i.e. the city of Vancouver.

Vancouver is the largest city of the province of British Columbia. Located on the shore of the west coast, it is a coastal seaport city as well. The territory of the Greater Vancouver area consists of several parts, which include Vancouver itself, Surrey, Coquitlam, Burnaby, North Vancouver, Richmond, New Westminster, Langley, and others. The Greater Vancouver has a population of around 2.3 million inhabitants, which makes it the third largest (in terms of population) metropolitan area in Canada.

Vancouver is unique due to many factors, such as a beautiful and picturesque nature, its location by the ocean and next to the Rocky Mountains, its ethnicity, which is extremely diverse, and its film industry. Undoubtedly, there are plenty of other things that make the city so popu-

lar and unique, but the above mentioned ones are the most essential in terms of understanding the success in development.

During previous years Vancouver has become the most expensive city of Canada (The Canadian Press, 2013). Although, according to different mass media, people are willing to pay this price for the privilege to be part of that west coast experience. With lots of plans being implemented and goals to be reached in the nearest future, Vancouver proves its important role for the country and its ability to be an important player in the global arena. Vancouver was the world's "most liveable city surveyed until 2011", according to Economist Intelligence Unit (2013); however, now it holds the third place only. The same source also states that life "in the city on the edge of the rainforest" is now more expensive than even in New York, which makes Vancouver the most expensive city not only in Canada but in North America (The Huffington Post B.C., 2013).

Vancouver is constantly improving and achieving some new objectives, which in a way proves that the city has enough resources, including financial. After the XXI Winter Olympic Games, Vancouver started to develop even faster and attracted more businesses, which led to growth in income of the citizens. According to BCStats.gov.bc.ca, all the numbers in statistics represent more or less stable development and improvement in lives of citizens. Even one look at a general situation in Canada in the travel business proves its development, despite the crises occurred in 2008 (see APPENDICES 5 and 6). Therefore, citizens are becoming wealthier, even though the prices are still high, but the citizens of Vancouver are capable of affording a lot more than some other provinces of Canada. For example, they can afford luxury travel with no "damage" to their budget, and they can repeat this experience over and over again, which makes them the required category of customers for luxury travel business.

3 INTERNET MARKETING IN TRAVEL BUSINESS

Obviously, travel business is based around experiential leisure, a field where competition is countered by offering more detailed information on services whenever the potential customer desires so. Essentially social media make the turn to customer relations that other mass media outlets cannot fully realize, this being the bidirectional communication between the customer and the product/service provider. This has become possible due to a rapid development of the Internet, which is "a global computer network providing a variety of information and commu-

nication facilities, consisting of interconnected networks...”, according to OxfordDictionaries.com. Definitely, besides standing as digital representation of word-of-mouth interaction, the Internet storage and retrieval opportunities in a wide scale allow for very pedantic analyzing and reactive business protocols.

As the Internet was developing, different services started being promoted; however, this way of promotions does not fit all businesses. For instance, a hairdresser cannot benefit from the world web due to locality of the business. In contrast to that, retailers do benefit from the use of the Internet a lot. Many businesses exploit the Internet opportunities using its full “capacity”, and yet there is a lot to be created.

Nowadays, the technology of the Internet is growing and developing so fast that luxury markets have a certain strong need to become the “central hub of two-way communications with customers” (Danziger 2005, 270). This is essential for prosperity of the company and business in general. Being able to listen to and understand your customers’ needs, desires and even fantasies is crucial. The idea of luxury is also based on something that has been created in consumers’ minds, i.e. their desires are transmitted into real things and offers. The whole industry is based on expectations and a need to exceed them to keep your customers satisfied and, thus, loyal. Sometimes, luxury is more about the way you present it and create it in consumers’ minds rather than the way you do it. The ability to present a nice-looking “package” of luxury service is way more important than trying to persuade your customers about how good it is.

Speaking about that “package” effect, it is good to know and remember that you cannot use the same look of luxury service during a long period of time and more obviously for the same customers. Customers are like big children expecting a nice “package”, which satisfies their wishes and gives something extra, like a small but pleasant bonus, so-called “augmented service”. The ability to make it special to each individual consumer is the core in company’s operations. If the company is capable to make it different every time, it is winning the competition in this kind of innovativeness. But it has to be consistent. Standards are easily replaced and people demand more on the services that are advertised as the augmented ones. Something as simple as a price drop may become a huge tactical advantage that downgrades competitors augmented services into overpriced in the eyes of the consumers, but naturally with conscious risk. When such an action is usually followed by a new augmented product, it be-

comes a new staple of the industry, usually followed by the “stripped”, but less costly versions brought out by the competitors, restarting the cycle to gain customers again. To survive this Ferris wheel, companies need to realize, remember and use their core elements; thus, we can speak here about the company’s DNA. We are going to get back to this in our empirical part.

3.1 Marketing as interaction via social media

Nowadays, interaction is acquiring more and more powerful influence on business world, but what is interaction? The best definition, most suitable for this aspect, is given by Merriam-webster.com, according to which interaction is “mutual or reciprocal action of influence”. While interaction people discuss different things, including different companies and their products or/and services. And this gives birth to a very strong and powerful “word-of-mouth”, which influences businesses in a positive or negative way respectively.

It is always necessary to remember about interaction with customers via social media and also personally, if there is such an opportunity. And this is not only concerning loyal customers, but every potential customer as well. Such interaction is essential to receive primary customer data, which helps the company to analyze “requests”, plan further operations and directions in business, and also remain visible and responsive to those, who consumer or are going to consume your service.

Obviously, it is not the most difficult thing to do; however, it is time consuming and it requires constant involvement into the process. The more social media a company uses, the more visibility it gets, but it also takes more time to keep updated on all of used social media.

Information must be always relevant to the market’s demand and different trends, so that the company could predict them. Whether it is a simple interaction, or it is an interaction, which involves further cooperation, both work great for the company. If the company is trying to be closer to its customers or even those, who are getting familiar with the product or service of this company, it earns positive reputation. Customers feel they are listened to and they are important. This is a crucial psychological aspect, which is taken into consideration by many companies. This aspect is going to be analyzed deeper in the empirical part of the thesis.

What comes to deeper understanding of this aspect, it is good to think of what if the company does not interact with its customers properly or does not interact at all? As practice shows, if the company does not pay too much attention to different social media and especially feedback concerning its products or services, it becomes visible for everyone. What actually happens is that customers see no response and feel careless attitude towards them, and they do not share their ideas, suggestions with the company. Later on, when it comes to some problems, customers try to contact, interact with the company, and they hear complete silence and careless attitude. This brings “word-of-mouth” into game. Obviously, this affect may be disastrous for the company if proper measures are not taken in time. According to desk.com, “a negative experience usually causes two to four times as much negative word of mouth as a positive experience”. This also proves the truth that customers tend to remember company’s failures rather than its success; therefore, it is like walking on a thin ice, when companies must understand what they might lose if they ignore this aspect of marketing.

Definitely, beside stated interaction between the company and customers, there is another very important type of interaction, which also influences business. This type is called customer-to-customer interaction (C2C), when there is a separate “world”, in which customers are able to communicate and share their experience. This “field” can be named as unexplored, because new social media appear and people dive into them to try a new “thing”. Companies simply have to keep up with that pace and remain updated.

As mentioned earlier, simple interaction with customers is already free marketing, which works positively for the company. The same “word-of-mouth” can have a positive effect on the company’s image. People tend to share their experience with friends, family, acquaintances, colleagues, or even similar customers. It is an extremely powerful marketing tool, which benefits the company, if used properly.

3.1.1 Marketing styles in social media

As the Internet has evolved into an advertisement medium of its own right, there has always been a prominent and consistently popular manner utilizing its potential for marketing. There are other versatile and accessible choices on how to gain visibility for companies, but in many cases it has been boiled down to the utilization of banners display ads whose locations have been strategically placed on the crucial websites to improve the company visibility. This tech-

nique is still relevant, but the rising popularity and commercial image for social media has created a whole new channel for marketers to approach a consumer on a more personal level and gaining a new perspective on the issue of customer-based development and more lasting customer loyalty. Pulling of such a feat does not come around effortlessly, for looking at the possibilities social media has to offer just in terms of marketing, it is much more complex and unforgiving, leaving an effectively orchestrated marketing campaign to become a very arduous chore. As Sigala, Christou and Gretzel point out: “Many social media and online marketing agencies are actually more innovative and ahead of the curve regarding social media for marketing purposes” (Sigala, Christou, Gretzel 2012, 81).

As a matter of fact, companies themselves have contributed in making social media a more visible part of modern culture. Inclusion of most prominent social media communities into companies’ website index demonstrates the impact those services have on business culture. How those are utilized though, differentiates. In general, the affair of using social media marketing can be separated to three different subcategories, all of which differ slightly in terms of their intended audiences and utilized channels. The following division has been carried out in the accordance of the model as described by Sigala, Christou and Gretzel:

1. Public relations rely heavily on more official and traditional news distribution. Essentially this boils down to using public relations experts to utilize already established professional news outlets to carry out the role of the medium between the company and the social media.
2. Using blogs, videos and other more consumer-based medium for marketing is called marketing content generation. It does not tend to incorporate so much as mere factual content, but concentrates more on what consumers can be identified and entertained with. One of the expert opinions comes from a public relations firm Weber Shandwick, viewing that 81 per cent of the consumers have easiness and effectiveness of the Internet search influences a lot in molding an opinion about a company.
3. Viral messaging is the method many companies seek to make just right. These campaigns are usually recognizable of their swiftly executed shock material that nevertheless stays entertaining. A successful viral campaign is usually demonstrated by a vast number of times it is passed on in social media, enabling a wide range of market visibility.

3.1.2 Reasons for social media marketing and customer feedback

Marketers rarely reach every desired demographic through a single social media. To truly benefit from an advertisement carried out in the Internet, there lies the requirement to understand who uses what networking service, when they use it and how they use it. Only then the marketing strategy can be visualized for execution. According to socialmediatoday.com, approximately 90 percent of companies located in North America are integrating their marketing strategies to social media, a tactic 74 percent of those companies deem invaluable important and even regard it as the prime channel in improving companies' success.

Marketing is a business action associated to receive massive amounts of budget to increase the sales. The social media has made it possible to mellow this effect to a large extent as the cost efficiency has decreased much thanks to the digitalism and its influence on advertising. Lots of the funding that is in the end associated here ends up being the purchase of market space around the web, but even that can be avoided to a certain limit. In the event that the message in the marketing campaign is crafted to fit the parameters of demographics' liking, this can lead to the advertising responsibility being shifted from the company onto the public. Having a similar effect as a mouth-to-mouth advertising, it happens much more rapidly online and saves in budget department become a lot tolerable. Even with that in mind, free is not the only recommendable option. Any online marketing portfolio should include a reasonably priced advertising as a common component, just as long as it can be utilized effectively.

Undoubtedly, the Internet expands everywhere. According to emarketer.com, more than 1,47 billion people used social networking services in 2012. That number alone encourages many entrepreneurs to take up a chance to approach consumers online, since the general audience can be reached more easily here than through any other medium. Besides an obvious advantage of a broad market visibility, social media can act in completely opposite manner. Through narrowly defining the targeted market groups, they can be approached through more niche-oriented outlets.

Even the concept of receiving consumer feedback has been going through some alterations. To keep on track on how people view and appreciate brands, many companies monitor on what is afloat in social media at the moment and what people wish from an innovation. This

desire of being effectively ready to respond to any new change of trend has lead up to the point where marketing groups are keeping track on blogosphere, in essence supervising every major move happening in the blogging community.

These choices help companies in building a closer relationship with their customers. Feedback in both negative and positive prospects molds the company in the hands of the audience which enables them to place more trust on their product/service provider for they are modified while listening to those who use them. When an enterprise sets up its social media channels to resemble more a community than a consumer survey, news, product placements and other information becomes much more compelling for the public.

Other than an external outlet, companies can make their own business hierarchy a more tight-knit entity when they utilize social media internally. Knowledge management evolves and it becomes easier to identify and contact key people and important information.

3.1.3 Internet as a salesperson

Anyone can create a website for themselves, so when an Internet domain is created solely on the purpose of advertising and enhancing the sales of one's goods and services, slapping a standard product description rarely suffices for an all-out marketing campaign. Online, first impressions do matter, even more than a meeting in a physical realm. The very first page the customers unlock in their browser should respond to their needs, not the company's. Any good company knowing their identity and strengths can turn their services from a purchasable consumer item into a customer benefit.

Empathy helps you succeed. Not a common thing to say while doing business, but nevertheless is more than relevant. In service this boils down to the question: How would you like to be treated? That serves as a base point from which to make applications to individual customer needs, but setting up the business in a way it generates the feel that can be viewed in person or through the screen of a computer by anyone and regarded as a respectable business by is a situation from where the most rewarding, the most demanding customers are attracted.

For a company such as a travel agency, it becomes essential for survival to look after small details that if gone wrong, can easily amass to a disaster for both the client the and the service

provider. Just a sloppily put together online booking system can prove to be an Achilles heel for a good sale. Overbooked flights, misinformed schedules for hotel rooms and overall negligence towards a customer do not polish reputation as a trustworthy vacation organizer.

Much of a standard sales negotiation is easy to correlate on how business is handled online and how people can be persuaded to take up on the offer the salesperson has dealt. The Internet corresponds only if the customer desires so. Marketing online transpires as a chess game where the starter has to issue all of its moves on a single turn, whereas the opponent can freely choose when to terminate the whole interaction. To start off a domain meant to advertise the company, the preliminary plan should lay out a few cornerstone principles, just as identifiably to the Internet marketing as well as common business practice (Fox, 2000):

1. The objective of a customer visit.
2. Response to customer needs to reach that objective.
3. A visual demonstration to show for the customer.
4. Predict customer concerns and objections.
5. How does our company stand out from our rivals?
6. Benefits that matter to the customer.
7. Turning those benefits into sources of income.
8. Strategies to nullify customer's objections.
9. Strategies to seal the deal.
10. Possible surprises – How to deal with them?

Needless to say, regardless of the nature of the final plan, it has to be flexible. The Internet is the most rapidly developing medium for business. The options of payment vary in popularity and accessibility from person to person, language options represent a whole another issue with coding and web page layout and interactive choices may easily turn into customer's busywork on an event of outdated.

3.1.4 Optimizing the online content

There used to be a time when an advertisement was more of an accidental coincidence rather than a deliberate chain-mail disguised as an entertainment. The online content is defined to consumers as something to be shared and spread. Especially online communities have thrived on such actions, becoming central hubs where companies from numerous varying fields can

utilize current trends and garner visibility as well as development data thanks to simple mechanisms of “likes” and dislikes”.

Simple psychology dictates that people make friends with individuals who, in one way or another share the same hobbies and interests. It makes natural for them to be involved in online communities of the same nature and for that, they make a much wider target to aim from a marketers’ point of view. In this case, the potential customer selection has already been carried out by the target group itself. Closed networks of people are the ideal playground to experiment on a new content and with the help of it to break out from the rest of the herd. As Sweeney put it: “you want to have your site visitors feel as they are part of your online community...” (Sweeney 2010, 9). Any competitor can be toppled easier with a pinpointed and tactfully crafted content rather than an onslaught of black-and-white advertisement without a specific identity included in it.

The ancient law of business economics is based around human mind. Those who can read other people, win. One way to demonstrate that is the need hierarchy by Abraham Maslow (Hakola & Hiila 2012, 34), organizing each need into a layer of a pyramid.

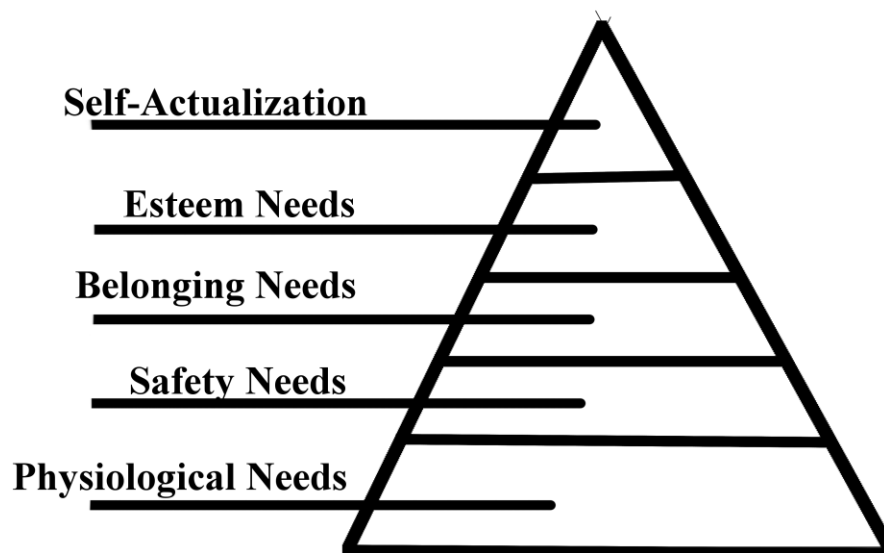


FIGURE 1. Maslow’s pyramid of hierarchy

The pyramid is composed to correspond with basic human needs. From down to the top each segment is followed by a natural, consequent behavioral or emotional pattern. The primal

need of nourishment leads to urge to experience a safe, risk-free life. This is followed by social needs, a need to upkeep the relationships tied with other people. Esteem needs can be translated as the desire to be accepted and acknowledged. The fifth level, self-actualization represents our will to create and act on our own accord and belief. A few changes need to be made for the pyramid to correspond to the Internet environment. For a person who is heavily using the Internet as a proxy, this can translate to five separate stages of desires that need to be answered, which are the following (Hakola & Hiila 2012, 36):

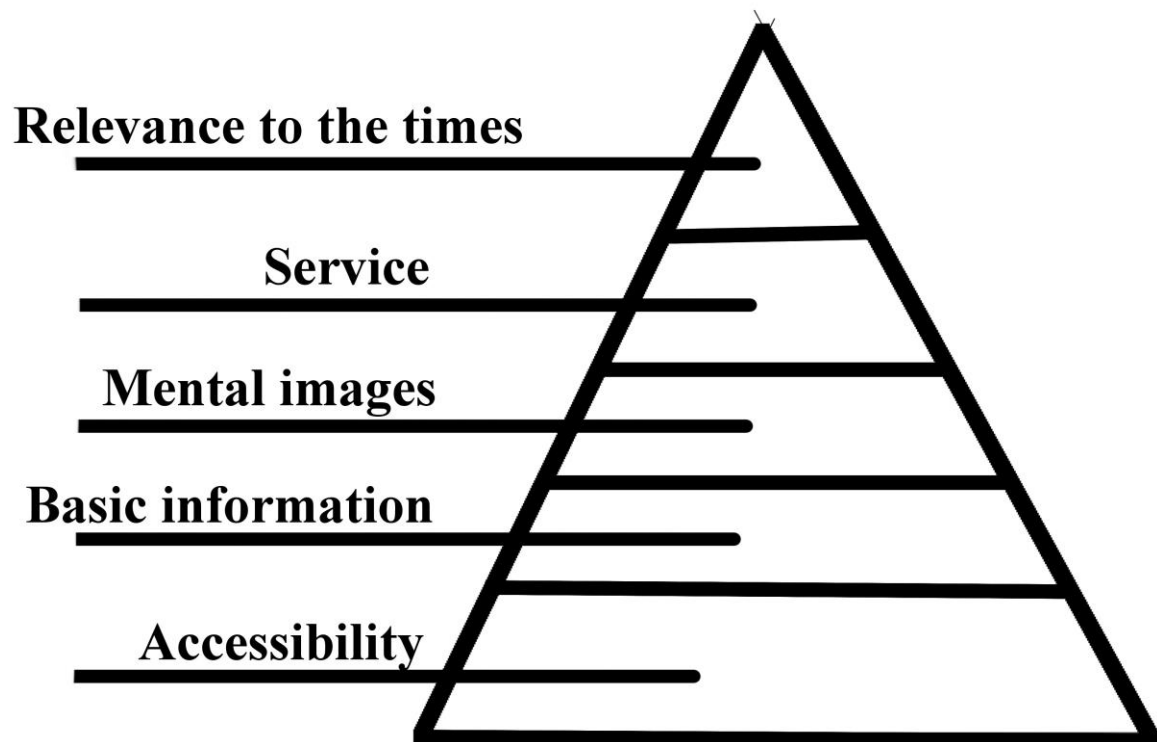


FIGURE 2. Maslow's pyramid of hierarchy modified into the Internet pyramid of hierarchy

This model can be easily translated to any Internet activity, but especially companies bent on profiting from its possibilities may find most of it. As with the original Maslow theory, here the idea is also to climb from bottom to the top, clearing each of the steps.

Accessibility, difficulty to find

On the first level of the hierarchy in question is the matter of accessibility. There is no doubt that the primary concept in these matters tends to be associated with the optimization of search engines, but here that is not the case. What matters more here, is the issue of whether

or not a customer may find it easy to come across with content produced by the desired company. This includes all the possible online outlets, encompassing the official websites, Facebook and any other. The material in those sites is ought to be considered if they all possess the same relevance or do some of them fall short and do not possess the same information as the others. Further complicating things are the newer trends of electronic communication such as interface comparison to phones and tablets.

The issue of marketing with mass content or a focused demographic in this case is for the most of the part played for the more defined marketing standpoint. A marketing strategist and social media extraordinaire Riku Vassinen was supporting the idea of quantitatively massive Internet advertising, nowadays is not an avid speaker for its execution (Hakola & Hiila 2012, 37). He emphasizes the need to make assessments on who the real target group is and how they surf the web in terms of hardware and interface, leaving crucial decision making to the point where people can analyze if utilization of components in question suits the business strategy the company sports.

Basic information

It does not get more standard than this. It is hard to view basic as the hook to draw customers in; technically it is not generally viewed as a component that can in itself increase time a consumer spends online due to a certain page. All this only emphasizes how important it is to get it right for this one, especially since the art of depicting oneself in fluent, short and commercially effective manner is relatively challenging. When being involved in numerous channels online, all those channels ought to possess the same relevant information, so the public may draw a mental image of the company in question. Essentially the main points are simply the description of what the company actually does, what it is, what are the services and/or products it sustains on and, if necessary, how it may be contacted.

Mental images

After the initial discovery and finding what the company is about, people start to create their own thoughts on how to view it. Naturally, the mental image is what every company seeks to make out of their advertisement campaigns, imprint a memorable visage of their establishment to reel in more customers. Anything from a line of text to a video clip works as a way to make a memorable impression and widen the perspectives of a brand.

Besides more obvious requirements that are valid in this environment, usually from the top being the attributes of fun, memorable, interesting and standing out, the environment itself poses another feature to it, the relevance to the times. Facebook and social media in general has become the tool to fill this void, as from the technical standpoint updates have become a lot less painless chores thanks to a simple status update function, deriving a more acute need to tamper with more complicated coding issues and website interfaces.

Service

The service brought up on the third ladder of the hierarchy is meant to concentrate on the customer service policies practiced online. It can be represented by an online shopping system, customer chat or by a separate page in a social media network, meant specifically to have interactions with the public to find the relevant information to enhance own marketing strategies. This can be somewhat painlessly integrated into other relevant content, such as tips on more services on the side and possibly even completely separate, partnered companies.

Such partnerships can transpire to become beneficial for both parties, often supplementing each other's advertising, but still upholding neutral link between them. This kind of symbiosis can be demonstrated with the symbiosis that magazines tend to have with clothing manufacturers or shared Internet advertisement space by independent online stores and larger entities such as Ebay.

Relevance to the times

On the top of the whole pyramid lies the relevance to the times, translatable to the reactions instigated by changes in the industry and responses to relevant business criticism that has been put forward by the own clientele. This network content is what people value highly in online world. Being modern not only keeps a clientele closer, but it instigates people to share their opinions more easily and opening up the more critical issues that may plague company's policies online.

A steady, continuing rise in social network users, building up to more than 230 million new users in 2012 (eMarketer, 2013), has stiffened the competition for marketers, mending the use of a monthly electronic newsletter to become a less effective method of advertisement. Online

content can't be just superficially satisfying, but there must be motivation to uphold those channels in order to respond to what consumers wish to gain from supporting the company.

Niche in social media marketing

In the case of a social network being tied entirely around a certain subject matter or having a very specific target demographic, you may call it a niche market. In these cases the objective of gathering a large, broad audience for the company is set much aside for a unitary Internet community brought together by similar interests and desires. The smaller size in relation to a general social network is an obvious fact, but when trying to reach a more secluded and proportionally minimized target group, the marketing can be much more streamlined.

3.1.5 Inbound and outbound marketing

It is perplexing in trying to make a distinctive argument on if either inbound or outbound marketing topples over another as a sovereign marketing form. Truthfully there is no absolute resolution to this matter (Ramdas, 2012). Neither one of these principles has a singular form to themselves nor can both exploit same marketing tactics, depending on the user.

When business is handled online, there are a very few cases in which inbound marketing-based plans are not incorporated into the business strategy. As inbound marketing relies almost entirely on the features that make use of the strengths of the Internet, most notably approachability and the ability to pack information tightly onto a compact space, outbound marketing is a much more traditional way of handling the advertising.

Outbound marketing pays a lot of attention in building the brand and raising awareness along with the company image around it by making contacts on potential customers directly. This, in general, means buying market space for the mainstream mediums, i.e. TV, print advertisements, e-mail questionnaire and even up to telephone marketing. It is obvious that these tactics are relatively costly and more importantly their predictable effectiveness is somewhat questionable. Looking from the marketing standpoint alone, the value of straightforward marketing has decreased. Public has grown to ignore blunt advertising, illustrated by CRM Daily that inbound marketing implementations generally bring 25 per cent more return on the investment in relation to other marketing strategies (Kim). Technologically outbound marketing

can be negated with relative ease. TiVos and spam filters have substantially narrowed the number of people that can be accessed via conserve methods, further creating doubt on their cost-effectiveness.

As Shreesha Ramdas points out, the mentality, which is usually associated with inbound marketing, is somewhat passive (2012). In business sense the idea is to get found by the customer rather than the other way around. Such a feat is strived to by creating content meaningful or entertaining enough so it will pass to as many people as possible due to a snowball-effect. This is intended to create an image of a relaxed and down-to-earth company, which understands what its audience finds fun and does not take itself too seriously. People may then relate to it much easily and the chances of applying the company's services, thanks to memorable brand visage, may increase.

In turn outbound marketing or the active approach relies heavily on the pre-emptive interaction initiated by the marketer. The principle layout is relatively simple on paper, tell about your product. The methods span from cold-calling to Internet video ads. It is due to characteristics such as these that this form has been labeled to some extent as "interruption marketing". Guy Kawasaki summarizes both these forms of marketing practice into a single sentence on trustmedia.com, writing: "If you have more Money than brains, you should focus on Outbound Marketing. If you have more Brains than money, you should focus on Inbound Marketing."

3.2 Tips on defining a market and setting a price

Obviously, before starting any business operations, it is crucial to understand in which area you are planning to "build" your operations and in which particular market you are going to conduct your business. However, this is far from everything you need to do to succeed. It is essential to be able to manage your operations in a way they could bring money into the company, in other words, to make profit. Once you choose the market you operate in, there are many small issues to follow that step.

As a matter of fact, we would like to concentrate here on another important aspect, which is also extremely crucial for a company's viability, i.e. how to price a service. Pricing a service is a very tricky game in the business world, because if you set the price too low, the company

does not receive enough or any profit, but once you set your price high, you might have no customers willing to purchase your service. To be more precise, it is necessary to focus on pricing luxury travel in a way the company could get enough profit and remain visible as a company, providing luxury service. Therefore, the following major aspects are to be discussed below.

3.2.1 Defining a market

Many companies stumble on the very first steps on their practice due to the vanity of not making a specific evaluation on what their main target group is or even their range of operations. The only thing this leads to is an abundant amount of money being thrown at the advertising space mostly compassed by a demographic that will most likely never emerge as a potential client. A company image gets transformed much by the community and clientele it serves. Identifying the ideal segment of the population and focusing on their desires makes a company begin on a steady foot.

Luxury tourism practically dictates of knowing the habits of your clientele. Seasonal preference and trends change on a rapid pace and the focus marketing campaigns shift alongside them. From that stem issues that affect the business on a personal level. It is important to chart how a company, nonetheless a luxury travel agency, can sustain itself when looking at the budgets that people who are in the range of company operations possess. The geographic location of the clientele can also illustrate more on where they work and what would be a suitable offer for them. The aforementioned capability of setting standards for searching ideal customers through social media is an ideal manner of approach when the factors of age, gender, marital status and family size can easily change the deal's conditions and features.

As much as finding the key aspects on if people do not respond well to the services, other important side of that analysis is what people enjoy or do not enjoy in the repertory of the competitors. Since social media is much like an open book, even rivals are a valuable source of information, very much contributing in motivating to come up with new innovations and augmenting products and services further. These traits that exceed customer expectations are vital, much due to the high level rivalry on any relevant field and the following brand positioning that secure much of the business in developed countries being dealt with the augmented products. (Kotler, Keller 2006, 372).

In other words, a company, selling luxury travel, sells not only a service, which includes accommodation, excursions, food, and so on, but also experience, which is equally valued by customers. Defining this is crucial for the company to be able to understand, where it is headed. The next step is to focus on the selling concept, which states that “consumers and businesses, if left alone, will not buy enough” of whatever the company sells (Kotler, Keller 2006, 15). This, basically, shows a certain need of marketing efforts in a way the company could sell this service good enough.

Obviously, since philosophy of the marketing concept has shifted from “make-and-sell” to “sense-and-respond”, companies, and especially luxury travel agencies, should focus on their customers and be able to listen and predict (Kotler, Keller 2006, 16). The company must find and offer the right product for its customers; thus, creating a value for them, which, actually, brings the company a competitive advantage.

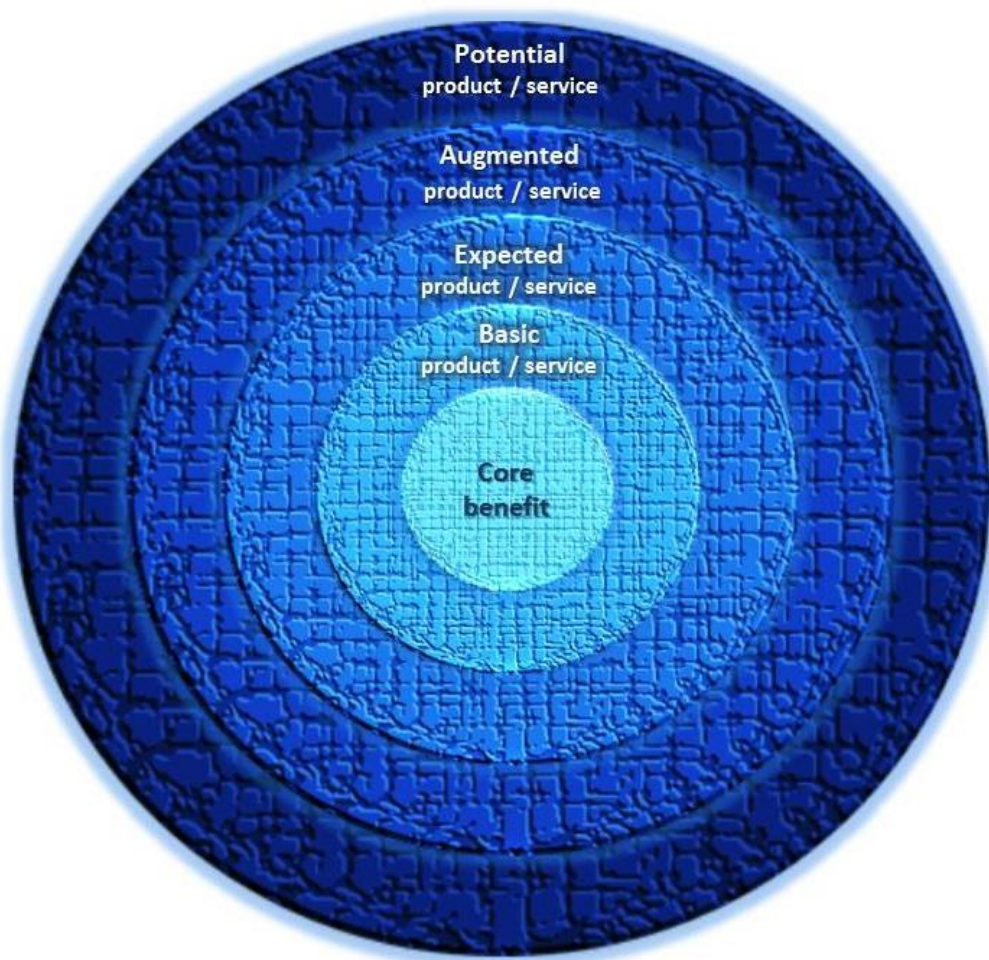


FIGURE 3. Five Product Levels

Speaking about the core benefit, we mean “the service or benefit the customer is really buying” (Kotler, Keller 2006, 372). In case of luxury travel, it is basically the experience customers actually purchase. Then, there comes a basic service, which is travel itself that includes destination, hotel room, shower, desk, towels, dresser, and closet. After that we can discuss an expected service, which comprises actual destination, clean room, working equipment, fresh towels, and rest as part of travel. The following level is an augmented service, which means something that exceeds customer expectations. In luxury travel it means complimentary breakfast, dinner, SPA procedures, or some excursions. The fifth level “encompasses all the possible augmentations and transformations” the service might undergo in the future (Kotler, Keller 2006, 373). Perhaps, it can be a helicopter city tour included, or tickets to opera, or other festival, or simply free entrance to an amusement park or zoo.

But what companies should always remember is that once they provide their customers with an augmented service, customers are going to expect it to be included next time; thus, such expectation makes currently augmented service an expected one in the future. All levels shift one step down to the core benefit as time passes. This is a natural process of “evolution” in the business world, and it especially concerns luxury travel companies, which they must pay enough attention to.

3.2.2 Pricing luxury travel service

When all the other standards consumers try to compare with several service providers end up equal, the final factor that decides the choice is usually the price. Tourism industry may leave that issue sometimes relatively as the set criteria within the field is rather widely applicable. The level of pricing can alter by the fluctuations that go around in the world of trends, desired location, specifically required transportation services and even up the critical feedback a resort may have received. Tourismindustryblog.co went through this subject in its article, setting out to pinpoint the features that have a role to play in how the pricing on tourism industry is usually settled (2010).

Any company wishes to offer something that nobody else can. If there is something that people can refer to as unique, then the company has a lot of freedom in making their own decisions on how to price it and have a relevant advantage already to the competition. Of course,

anybody would need a clear picture on all expenses to make estimations on any services, be it the standard pricing, leave it alone any exceptional, one-of-a-kind-service or how competitors have valued their services and if there is a way to counter it without damaging one's own financial status.

The pricing policy may change with the inclusion of possible value added services, not to mention the much obligatory analysis of the desired target market and an overview of what kind of image is wanted and the type of desired demographic. When talking about traveling it will eventually revolve around time and place, so in many cases it is much about the dynamic pricing.

Lisa Magloff from Demand Media has interpreted this being divided into 5 distinctive categories on (Magloff, Dynamic Pricing Strategy):

- *Segmented Pricing*, an idea of purchasing an upgraded service, usually more extravagant from the standard.
 - *Peak User Rating* is easily associable with transportation services, defining a service that is scheduled for a different time than usual is accustomed.
 - *Service Time* is also a dynamic factor, implying for a faster delivered service.
- After
- *Time of Purchase*
 - Final issue is the somewhat ambiguous matter of *Changing Conditions*. Any industry can change a time of uncertainty. People's interest for a certain location may boom thanks to media coverage it has received. A political upheaval or a natural phenomenon may play part also as they are heavily pressing issues that can change a lot in tourism business.

3.3 Tools of social media

Obviously, speaking about social media we should also speak about the tools used for communicating with potential and actual customers. There are lots of tools for social media; however, here we are going to review the most popular and the most viable ones.

It is logical to start up with *Facebook*, which is the world famous "free social networking website that allows registered users to create profiles, upload photos and video, send messages

and keep in touch with friends, family and colleagues”, Dean, 2009). Its marketplace provides its members with a possibility to post, read and reply to ads. Groups, events and pages can be created to promote services and be closer to customers.

There is also a funny and quite simple definition provided by Gizmodo.com, which states that “Facebook is like a jail. You sit around, waste time, have a profile picture, write on walls and get poked by guys you don’t really know”. Nowadays, as this word, i.e. Facebook, is used as a verb, there is one more definition, which is quite similar to the above mentioned ones, which says that to Facebook is “to spend time using the social networking website Facebook” (Oxford Dictionaries).

The second social medium to be reviewed is, naturally, Google, i.e. *Google+*. According to Rouse, it is “a Google social networking project” (2011). The Google+ design team sought to replicate the way people interact offline more closely than is the case in other social networking services, such as Facebook and Twitter”. Its project’s slogan is “Real-life sharing rethought for the web”.

In Google Plus there is a certain division between so-called “circles”, in which you may have family, friends, colleagues, just acquaintances, or simply be following the page. The idea is also based on constant updates and also gatherings, such as online using video chat, or real-world meeting among those people. It is very compatible with mobile devices, which makes it very simple for users. It is important to mention that most of the social media are available in mobile devices, which gives them a certain advantage over those that are not compatible.

Speaking about Google Plus, it is reasonable to speak about *YouTube*, especially since it became part of Google products. According to Webopedia.com, YouTube is “a popular free video-sharing website that lets registered users upload and share video clips online”. Anybody is able to watch a video without registering; however, you need to register to upload your videos. It is a popular source among private users as well as among companies, celebrities, and others.

YouTube has evolved greatly since its first appearance in the Internet. At first, registered users were able to upload only short, limited in time, videos, whereas now videos reach up to four or five hours length. It became possible as soon as YouTube became popular and certain

changes took place. As for companies, they are able to create their own so-called “channels” and upload their stuff in there.

One of the most popular services is Vevo, which basically allows users to watch videos in High Definition (HD). This service is widely used in music industry, but there are certain expectations concerning all industries, which may allow companies look better, having more official “face” on the most popular service on YouTube.

Moving on to the next medium, it is necessary so mention *Twitter*, which became extremely popular during a couple of years. As per McMahon, Twitter is “a free social networking micro-blogging service that allows registered members to broadcast short posts called tweets” (2010). Once registered, you can read, follow, re-tweet, reply or favorite other users’ tweets. You can follow private users as well as celebrities and stay up-to-date in Twitter. The idea is to stay updated non-stop, to keep posting new tweets to be followed and viewed. You can use special #keywords with the “#” symbol as a keyword; this helps to be found and be visible.

Beside the above given definition, there are some funny and unusual ones to describe this social medium. Urban Dictionary provides us with an unusual definition of Twitter, which is “a stupid site for stupid people with no friends, who think everyone else gives a s*** what they're doing at any given time”. Another online source gives a funny understanding of Twitter, which is “telling the world what you had for breakfast/lunch/dinner in 140 characters or less” (Geekdictionary.computing.net).

The official website of Twitter is sharing the official definition of the service, which is “a real-time information network that connects you to the latest stories, ideas, opinions and news about what you find interesting”. Therefore, reviewing some of the definitions, it is easier to understand the meaning of this social medium in comparison to the others.

The next one is *Pinterest*, which is growing and becoming more and more popular. The official Pinterest website states that Pinterest is “a tool for collecting and organizing things you love”. This is a good definition; though, it is not truly clear what is meant by that. Therefore, we need to look at some other websites, which tell us what it is. IContact.com is saying that Pinterest is a “new social network photo sharing service is a pinboard-style website that allows users to create a theme-based image collection of their choice” (Cornett, 2013). This

definition is much better in a way it provides the main description of the service. To be more precise, it is worth to mention that registered users are able to create and manage their so-called boards, depending on their interests, events, or simply if they copy, or re-pin, other users' pictures.

Another social medium is *LinkedIn*, which is “a social networking website designed for business professionals”, according to TechTerms.com (2010). This website is great for sharing work-related information, i.e. to have an online list of professional contacts. This is very important in a business world; it is crucial for companies to have their profiles on LinkedIn to be visible. This website is like an online business card of the company.

As a matter of fact, the whole idea of LinkedIn is based on a theory of “six degrees of separation”, according to which every person on the planet is “connected to any other person on the planet through a chain of acquaintances that has no more than five intermediaries” as per whatis.techtarget.com (Rouse, 2009a). LinkedIn is a perfect place for people to find a job, to establish new business connections or even partnerships, to share ideas and be visible to the world.

It is reasonable to mention *Instagram* as one of the growing websites, which is widely used by people. As per IContact, Instagram is “a free social network based photo-sharing program that enables users with a valid account to immediately take, apply a digital filter..., and then instantly share a photo on their profile page”. Initially, Instagram was meant to be just a product for iPhone, later it expanded to be a product, which could be used on all Android devices. Nowadays, several platforms beside Android are able to use this application, which is now a separate social medium.

What comes to *MySpace*, it is “an online community that allows friends to keep in touch and meet new people as well”, as per Techterms.com (2007). The website was meant to be a place where bands could promote their music, but it expanded into a community for all. Obviously, this definition might be simply not enough to understand what makes this website different from others. If we look at Urban Dictionary, we discover that MySpace is “the ultimate game of testing your ego. It becomes a competition of seeing who has the most friends, so you add everyone you've made eye contact with in the past 6 years”. This is a little too unusual and rude; however, this one gives a better understanding of this network.

The next one is *Flickr*, which is “an image and video hosting web service”, as per IContact.com. Obviously, this definition does not bring anything new into the online world, but all the rest provided definitions are saying quite the same idea. On Flickr one can upload photos into “photostream”, which allows creating some categories, according to which other users are able to see you photos while carrying out a simple search.

Flickr was acquired by a search engine called *Yahoo!*, which comprises some services. It definitely includes advertising and social media within its platform, but the main source of users' communication is still acquired Flickr. However, Yahoo! has *Yahoo Buzz*, which is “Yahoo's version of social news”, according to About.com (Nations). This service lets users vote for stories from the web and increase their ratings. As soon as a story gets enough votes and its rating becomes high, it appears on Yahoo's home page.

Another network, which is worth discussing is *Tumblr*, which is “a popular microblogging platform designed for creative self-expression. It is considered a mindful alternative to Facebook and other social media websites where users blog on a myriad of topics”, as per techopedia.com (Janssen). Basically, users can post different things, such as photos, videos, quotes, texts, links, or anything else they might desire to.

Speaking about Google and Yahoo!, we need to mention *MSN* as well. MSN stands for Microsoft Network. It includes a search engine, different means of entertainment and social network. In other words, MSN is an alternative to the above mentioned search engines Google and Yahoo!, which are considered as the major ones. Speaking about MSN, we should take a look at *Windows Live Spaces*, which is “an advertisement-supported instant messaging service”, as per Webopedia.com. This service offers file sharing, offline notifications, time-stamped messages, PC-to-PC calling and other features.

Continuing speaking about social media, it is important to mention *StumbleUpon*, which is “A great free web site that allows users to rate a site they like or don't like by pressing a thumbs up or thumbs down using a free add-on available through the site”, according to computerhope.com. By rating different site of your interest, you can browse more and more new pages, as well as use blogs and communicate with other users.

While reviewing *Multiply.com*, we discovered that the website was no longer in use. Therefore, it is not considered as viable in our further research.

As for *Blogger*, it is a product of Google and may be classified as social network as well. Its main purpose is blogging and commenting on posts; though, there is certain communication and space for advertising via posts or comments.

Another social network is *Tagged*, which “refers to someone or something who has a label attached to them for the purpose of identification or to give other information. When something or someone is given a nickname or description, then we can say he or that item has been tagged”, as per Ask.com. On Tagged users can play games, share virtual gifts, tags, or browse other profiles.

LiveJournal is “a social media platform that allows members to keep a blog, journal or diary and share their interests”, as per SearchCIO-Midmarket.com (Rouse, 2013a). This network has more space for writing and reading, where people can share large amounts of thoughts. According to the official website Livejournal.com, it is “an online community, a social network, and a place for self-expression”.

Vimeo is “a video-sharing website that allows members to view, upload and share videos”, as per SearchCIO-MidMarket.com (Rouse, 2013b). This network is somehow similar to YouTube, but definitely less popular. On this website users can use some tools to enhance videos; they can add music and use so-called “video school” to learn how to improve the quality of their videos.

What comes to a very close alternative to Facebook, we can speak about Russian website *Vkontakte*, which is “Europe's largest social networking website, with more than 100 million users”, as per SearchCIO-MidMarket.com (Rouse, 2012). This website basically allows users to do the same things as on Facebook but except some differences, such as watching and uploading videos, music, which is still a subject to licensing. It is still considered illegal to distribute free music and videos, including movies, episodes of TV-shows, etc. However, due to its popularity, many companies do advertise via vk.com.

And last but not least is *Skype*, which is considered as part of social media; even though, there were many doubts whether or not to distinguish it as social media network. Skype “fulfills many of the same functions that Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, etc.” as per Foremski (2012); therefore, Skype can be considered as part of social media.

For more precise definition there is necessary to use some other sources. One of them, i.e. SeachUnifiedCommunications.com states that Skype is “an IP telephony service provider that offers free calling between subscribers and low-cost calling to people who don't use the service (Rouse, 2009b). In addition to standard telephone calls, Skype enables file transfers, texting, video chat and videoconferencing”. Nowadays, almost every device has this service available and in use by people. It became well-spread recently and very important in the business world.

To sum up, it is worth mentioning that there are many other social media exist; however, this thesis includes the most popular and widely used ones. Obviously, some of the mentioned networks are more attractive for users; thus, they are more viable in a long-term vision.

3.4 Viral marketing

Viral marketing is the ideal tool for company's visibility, one all marketers seek after. In practice it is the type of marketing that participates in spreading itself. It revolves around of individuals finding entertainment or some other satisfaction in the content of the viral message, so much so that they feel like continuing its motion through web.

Ralph F. Wilson points out one the first examples of how viral marketing entered the scene back in the dawn of the new millennium (2012). The first bait Hotmail.com put forward into the market was its initial concept, a fully free e-mail service. The utilization of Hotmail marked that every e-mail that was put forth by this particular service provider had an advertisement attached them, encouraging people to take up Hotmail as their primary account. What followed was understandably that this led to a snowball effect. People who paid attention to this advertisement signed on to Hotmail and further expanded its clientele.

As an example, the Hotmail case works well. It may not be suitable for all possible scenarios, but the basic formula is worth to make note of. A major advantage it had was the most mar-

ketable word imprinted on the advertisement, that word being “free”. In order to get people acquainted with the product, companies offer these incentives, saving it later to press on the commercial material to make profit with. The word “free” also has another advantage to it. It is short and therefore very transferable to other mediums.

The Hotmail example does fall short a bit when taking into consideration e-mail’s ability to transform in scale. There is a limit even to servers, the electronic storage space for the user to stash all the data and the time it takes to make necessary adjustments in order to prepare necessary customer space expansions in order to have operations smoothly working again. This, however, is modifiable depending on the product.

After the issue the scalability comes exploiting the motivations and behavioral patterns around the web. In the Hotmail-case this was demonstrated by the rising popularity of e-mail and peoples’ desire to get an account. Finally making use of already existing communication networks is essential. This in a way can be seen as also the final step, which is when possible, using resources that are possessed by others like an advertisement on somebody else’s website, disguised in the form of an article or a simple link.

3.5 Entertainment in Internet marketing

Subliminal marketing is a constantly resurfacing theme in almost any major entertainment form. As for tourism this has for years served a very exploitable purpose when entertainment industry successes have transformed into high-profile, hugely budgeted advertisements that have reshaped the trends anew.

Social media can be an effective tool for promotion, but sometimes it is most effective when someone else is actually using it. Be it Twitter, Facebook, Google+ or any else social networks, the odds are that all of them have their share of celebrities using their services. An increased media exposure usually already on itself assures certain advertising if a well-known individual spends time in some particular place, but they themselves may sometimes boost this phenomenon by posting this info online and praising their vacation site. Ewan McGregor is a rather famous actor, further demonstrated by his current 154 000 Instagram followers (instagram.com). When he took a trip to Australia, he took several photos during his travels and posted them on Instagram making the manager of Australia’s North West Tourism Marketing,

Jo Durbridge to remark: "Nothing beats a recommendation from a family member or a friend, making social media a powerful communication tool within the tourism industry" (Taylor 2013). A demonstration of support from an "A-list" celebrity can easily improve the recognition. Anna Pointer writes on this: "...we're talking free publicity, heightened media interest and a subconscious nod of approval from a clientele that money simply cannot buy." (2009)

Another aspect of entertainment can be easily found on Facebook, which has become one of the most famous social media networks, which is globally used by people. People simply enjoy all the provided services, starting from simple communication to sharing pictures and commenting on them.

Speaking about entertainment in social media, we should mention Google+, and, perhaps, Google in general, and YouTube, which is now part of Google. This represents clear entertainment, when people can relax and enjoy "consuming" services. Being a good visual tool for social media, YouTube is also a very popular website, visited daily. Lots of commercials posted online as videos, either they are short advertisements or official videos of companies; they are all published on YouTube. People see entertainment during breaks, when they have free time, or simply as something they really like (<http://dev.newmediarockstars.com>, 2012). Google integrated YouTube into its own operations, so that now it is controlling one of the most popular networks.

There are far more examples of entertainment in social media, for instance, Pinterest, which can be very attractive in terms of "stealing" somebody's pictures they like and pinning them into their own albums. Such pictures can be somebody's personal photos or company's pictures, in order to advertise its service or product. Based on the information, mentioned in the earlier chapter, it is quite clear that all of social media have some degree of entertainment; some of them are more aimed at entertaining customers, meanwhile, some are more focused on the "real" product.

People are involved in the process of sharing on social media by doing their everyday things on their favorite websites. Besides, this all became possible and too affordable due to technological breakthrough, and, more precisely, touch-screen cell phones, tablet "computers" and also netbooks (<http://www.webpronews.com>, 2013). Basically, you can access your favorite website from wherever you are, if there is Internet coverage. In other words, people became

too dependent on social media and are strongly involved into the online world, enjoying all that they are offered, not realizing that it is all used as a means of marketing.

4 RENSHAW TRAVEL PRACTICES AND VALUES

Renshaw Travel is “a family-operated full service travel agency” located in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada (Wanderingheights.com). The history of Renshaw Travel starts in the second half of the previous century. Having such a solid background, the company is capable to provide a high level of luxury service.

Renshaw Travel employs a team of specialists, each responsible for his or her own field of activities or direction. The company utilizes the Internet and, in particular, different social media, a lot. Such need for the online “life” is understandable due to rapidly developing technologies. To be able to remain viable, gain profit and continue operations, Renshaw Travel has to keep up with all the “wonders” of the online world. But this is not the only thing, which helps the company to succeed. To have more thorough analysis, we are going to review and understand Renshaw Travel’s DNA.

4.1 Renshaw Travel’s DNA

Definitely, in order to understand the DNA of any company, we need to know what business DNA means in general. According to Perpetos, business or corporate, DNA “is the sum of all “unchangeable” elements of a company which combined describe its identity and uniqueness at the same time” (Perpetos.com 2009). Therefore we can conclude that in business terms DNA is the core of your company, something that makes it different, special and unique.

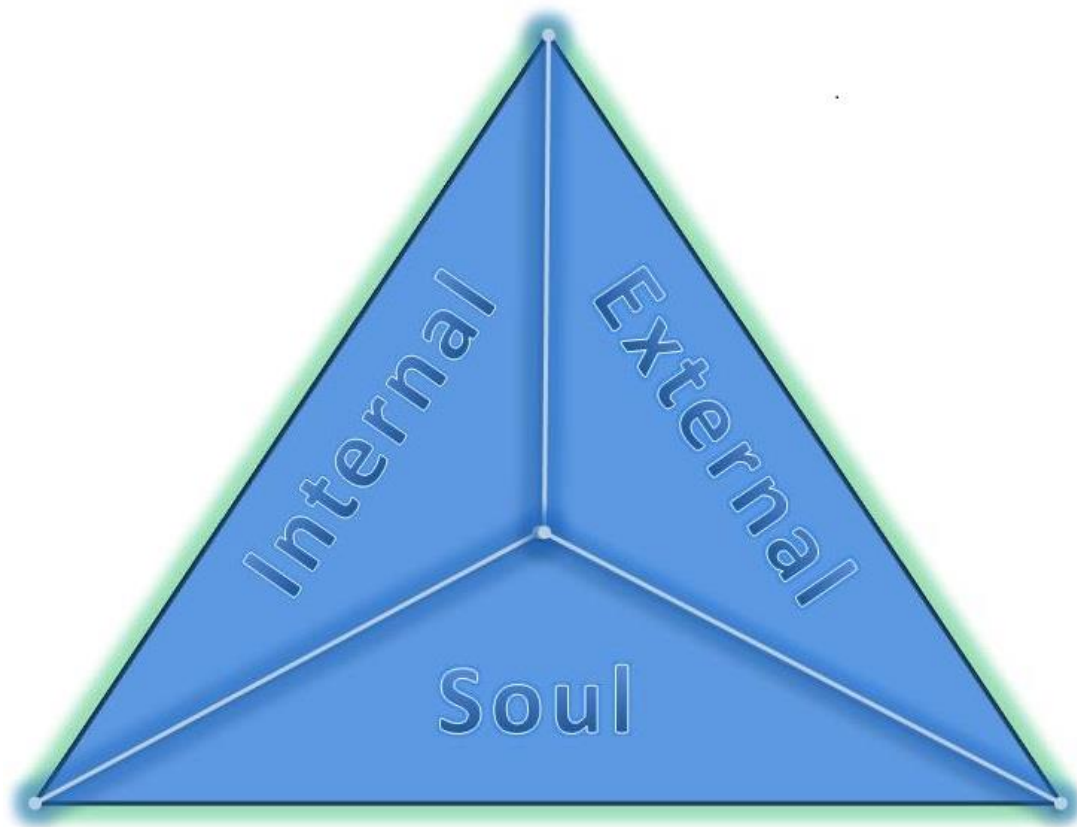


FIGURE 4. Company's DNA Triangle

Let us review this DNA triangle from a business point of view, and to be more precise, on an example of Renshaw Travel. Internal part of this triangle comprises different aspects, which the company has as its internal strength. We can definitely mention here huge expertise in luxury travel business, which brings Renshaw Travel a certain competitive advantage.

Moreover, quite extensive use of the Internet and social media, in particular, can be named as a positive internal factor for the company. Such usage of the latest technologies provides the company with an opportunity to keep up with the latest demands from the market, as well as to monitor competitors, if needed. Personalized database for each client is something that makes the service so special for customer. Besides, it gives rapid access to a targeted person and the right approach to each individual.

In addition to the above mentioned, the financial situation helps the company to develop, search for new ways to reward their customers with some bonuses, for example, a complementary dinner for two persons. Such good connections and relationships with partners is another component of the internal part of the triangle. It is quite a strong one. This is another competitive advantage that Renshaw Travel has. Not too many luxury travel agencies are able

to offer so many augmented services. Due to such good partnerships, the company managed to establish a good reputation, which is an additional component of the internal side of the triangle.

Another aspect, which could be reviewed as both internal and external, is location. The fact that the founder chose this particular place, as the 4th Avenue, Vancouver, is something that may be referred to internal aspect. What comes to the street itself and the city, it is, definitely, external aspect, which is very attractive to people. This location is not among the cheapest ones. This also tells that the company is able to afford that, as well as it is able to provide a high quality luxury service.

Due to the company's perfect location, it has its clientele, which is rather rich. Being wealth enough, the citizens of Vancouver are able to afford luxury services, such as travel. This is quite obvious for many companies, making business in this city. Winnipeg used to be considered as a hub for businesses, however, the situation is changing now, Toronto is considered as a business capital of Canada, since it is the largest city of Canada. Montreal is a mix of everything, but being the largest city of the province of Quebec, it has its own "life" and meaning (Winnipeg.cityandpress.com 2013). What comes to Vancouver, it is among the largest cities of the country, but also one of the largest and most important ports. A lot of shipping from China goes through Vancouver. It brings the city more money and makes people even wealthier. Besides, such importance attracts many people from other provinces, or even countries. This fact helps the company to make certain emphasis on its location.

Obviously, the province of British Columbia is very attractive for tourists, which also brings money to the city. However, the citizens of Vancouver sometimes feel tired of the climate and the same landscape; therefore, they want to see some new places. Here, when Renshaw Travel comes into play, offering spectacular islands, resorts, hotels, anything the client might wish and is able to afford. Thus, it is a very essential component for the company.

Moreover, it is not only a wish to travel and have some luxurious features in your life; it can also be viewed as culture. Compared with iPhone generation, when consumers became too dependent on those products and became some kind of a cult or culture. Luxury travel is a new culture, nowadays. It has its specifics due to its location. Most probably, you will not see too many offers in Winnipeg or Regina concerning luxury travel. The reason is simple. Such

business is associated with the place itself, and Vancouver is associated with something beautiful, luxurious, and also known as expensive to live in. This is quite a strong component of the external part of the triangle.

Obviously, there are more components of the triangle, but we are going to focus here on the main ones only. It already provides enough information to comprehend the company's fundamental components of the DNA.

Moving on to the third component of the triangle, we should view the "soul". This component is the core component for Renshaw Travel. It is like an engine, which pulls the company forward. It is a motivator, which also has a vision of the future. This third component is people. And this is true. People are those, who established Renshaw Travel, they are the family. People are those, who work at the company, they are the team. And also people are those, who purchase the service, thus, they make the company exist over time.

Soul is a very essential component to review. As an example of the soul of the company, we can recall Steve Jobs, who created a culture for iPhones, who led Apple to its heights and managed to become one of the most successful persons on Earth (Stevejobsdailyquote.com). Such examples of strong leaders prove that people are the most essential component of the company, which is why it is the soul of the company's DNA (Kelly 2011).

Renshaw Travel is always stick to its core values, such as family, friendship, quality and excellence in everything, and positive vision of the future. This is carried out by people, working there, who are the soul of this company. It is necessary to understand that during the company's analysis. It is a family business; thus, the main focus is on "Soul", either it is a single customers or a family, either it is a partners of Renshaw Travel or the internal atmosphere the company.

For a better visible representation of Renshaw Travel's DNA triangle we decided to gather all major points discussed earlier. This table represents a fundamental base of the company's DNA, brick by brick created into one piece. This table is provided below.

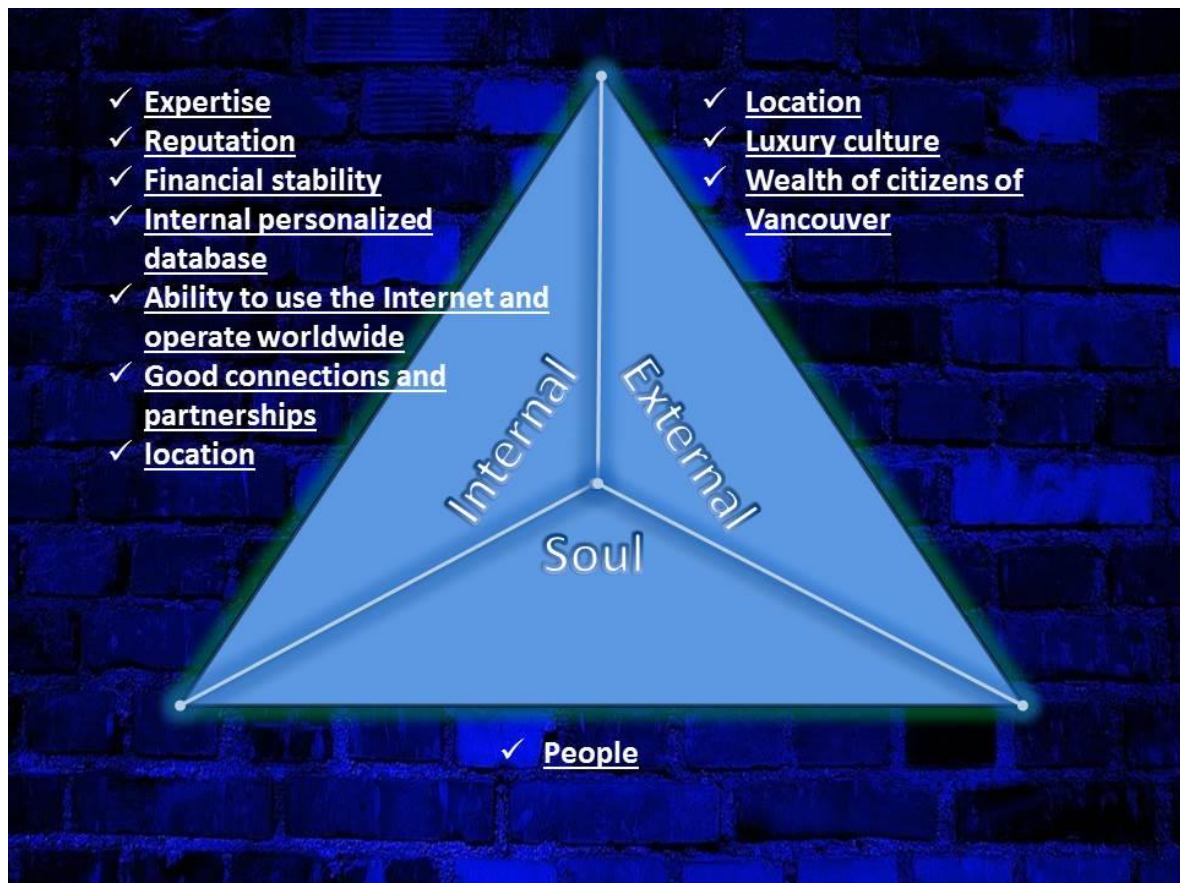


FIGURE 5. Renshaw Travel's DNA Triangle

At Renshaw Travel people are the family, or should it be named as the Family. It is important for the company that all employees are treated equally as member of the Renshaw family, that all customers and partners are special. Therefore, this component must be taken into consideration when considering a business. People are the engine for the business.

This also leads us the fifth component of the 5 Ps model. As a matter of fact, we are not going to discuss here all seven components, because we do not need all of them for the analysis. On the opposite side, the 4 Ps model is not enough either. We need to take into consideration the fifth component, which is "People".



FIGURE 6. Marketing Mix (Kotler, Keller 2006, 19)

Speaking about the fifth component, “People”, we should mean not only employees of Renshaw Travel, but also partners, customers, and even competitors. In such kind of business we need to comprise all these representatives of the component, because they all have direct influence on the company’s operations. Basically, we can speak about stakeholders (as human-beings) in this context. Definitely, luxury travel business means “luxury acquisition”, which a consumer is seeking. In this sense it is logical to understand this driving force, which is the engine in this business. On the other hand, competitors make it more complicated to survive in this field of activity. They make tough competition, but they also make the company search for new ways to satisfy a customer. It creates new offers, which are consumed by the company’s clientele. An also every employee of Renshaw Travel is important, because all of them make this possible. Partners are another reason it is possible. They assist the company in all possible ways seeking their own benefits from a mutual deal. Thus, we can see how a nice “package” is created under the stakeholders’ influence.

Speaking about the 4 P's model, we mean "Product" (or "Service"), "Price", "Place" and "Promotion". Its fifth component, "People", is also essential. In this particular thesis this component is crucial, as discussed earlier.

What comes to "Product", or "Service", in this particular case, it is quite clear that Renshaw Travel offers and provides luxury travel service in all aspects, from the moment of booking to the last minute of your travel. The company stands for quality in everything. Being a luxury company, Renshaw Travel has partnerships with luxury hotels, resorts, different related services, for instance, stores, restaurant, excursions, and so on. Brand names of amenities, provided at the destination of travel, are also essential for this business. As learned from the respondents' (some employees of Renshaw Travel) answers, we know that their loyal customers return to purchase the service three or four times a year in average. Therefore, high standards are a must for the company. Some of the respondents also mentioned that luxury service is as important for them as medicine. It is true, because you gain good emotions, you feel better and can achieve more with a good mood.

The main idea luxury products, services and experiences bear is that it is an investment in oneself. Luxury consumers believe that they do not spoil themselves, they invest in themselves. Luxury brands stand for quality, which is explaining such a strong desire and demand for luxury products, services and experience.

In luxury travel business customers seek "travel experience or vacation which includes unique and exclusive elements that they will be able to remember and cherish for a long time" (Danziger 2005, 5). All this makes this component so strong and required in the contemporary world.

What comes to "Price", it is partly overlapping with the previous component, "Product". People are willing to pay more for quality, for memories. They believe that quality is worth this money; health and well-being are worth it. Besides, they gain nice memories for a lifetime, which cannot be bought, literally. According to the respondents, Renshaw Travel's customers are ready to pay the required price, but they also know and expect some bonuses. As discussed earlier, loyal customers of the company expect yesterday's augmented service to be included into the "package", that is why it is called "expected service". This is a small bonus, which makes consumers happy, and, thus, they know that they get a little more with such price.

As for “Place”, this is also essential to review. First of all, it is the location of Renshaw Travel itself. By location the physical presence is meant. A perfect location helps the company be visible and also shows its ability to be called as luxury. Vancouver is a very expensive city, rents are highly priced, services, products, everything is expensive in this city. Therefore, such location proves that the company can operate successfully to be able to pay the bills and own this place. Renshaw Travel is taking part in different events to keep its visibility and, thus, to promote its services on different locations. Moreover, employees of the company often travel to different places and show pictures on various social media. Being physically in those places, they are able to have their presence and promote themselves. Besides, we should also understand the online presence. Different social media networks are a good source to advertise the service. They try to live virtual lives as well as the real ones. It is a very important component for the company.

Obviously, when speaking about “Place” in this thesis, we also comprise another component, which is “Promotion”. Promotion of services is a very important thing. Service is not visible or tangible; therefore, it becomes harder to advertise it. In case of a product, customers might just see it on a shelf and buy. As for service, it needs to be presented properly, so that it is stuck in consumers’ minds.

In luxury travel business promotion of services is a little different due to its specifics. This service is mostly oriented on a certain group of people, which is going to be reviewed further on. Definitely, luxury travel cannot be advertised the same way as most services are. It must be presented as luxury with something unique, suitable for each individual.

Renshaw Travel utilizes various social media networks to gain visibility and attract customers to its official website, in order to sell the service. Having its presence and followers on the most popular and most important social media networks, Renshaw Travel is able to improve visibility and its reach. Use of the Internet helps the company to reach its customers and partners. The company is able to communicate with them and also see (read) their wishes, ideas, comments, etc. It is crucial in terms of communication. This aspect is one of the most essential components of public relations. Customers want to see that they are heard and listened to, that they are treated with respect and that they are important.

As a matter of fact, word-of-mouth appeared to be the most powerful tool to promote the service. According to the respondents' replies, the company's loyal customers (or even new customers) spread word-of-mouth by simply sharing their great luxury experience with relatives, friends, acquaintances, colleagues, etc. This method is the most viable in this business due to people's willingness to communicate and share their thoughts. It is the most useful tool for Renshaw Travel beside the Internet. Therefore, it is that piece of the component, which is very much essential for the company.

It is quite obvious that promotion is made by people, either they are employees of the company, partners, or satisfied customers; it brings us back to the fifth component again, which is "People". Thus, we can conclude that all five components come as one and are all crucial for the company's operations and existence in general.

In this context we can speak about the 5 C's model, which is very similar to the 5 P's model, but has some differences. Discussing a product or a service, we can speak about "Commodity". In some text books and on some websites it is shown as "Consumer's solution" (Kotler, Keller 2006, 20). All of these do fit the idea of the model. We, basically, view what is produced by the company and, afterwards, consumed by customers. Thus, it is about satisfying consumers' needs.

As for "Cost", it is quite similar to "Price", because it may be reviewed and cost of the services, which is acceptable by a customer. If this satisfied his or her needs, it is worth what it costs. It is necessary to know, in order to "target frequent travelers and people who have a specific mindset – those who appreciate the benefits of luxury goods and services and are willing to pay more when they see the values" (Danziger 2005, 3). This is also a matter of a specific offer. If you are able to offer your customers something valuable not in terms of money, but in terms of experience, memories, it is attracting people to consume the service.

Speaking about "Place", we also mean convenience of this place. It comprises both the location of the physical office, and the online presence, if it is convenient enough for customers. And, as a matter of fact, convenience "influences the perceived value of a product"; thus, it influences its price (Curve Communications, 2013).

What comes to “Promotion”, it is transformed into “Communication”. “Communication views the promotional process as lateral, involving conversation between the customer and business” (Curve Communications, 2013)). It is considered that promotion involves just one-way communication, whereas communication means conversation with your customers, partners, etc. This component is very crucial especially in the XXI century. As being stated earlier, customers have power and they know it. They want to be listened to and heard. It makes companies adapt and provide a service, required by their clientele.

Moving to the fifth component, we can see that “People” are transformed into “Community” or “Company”. It is fairly true, because community means not just customers, but mainly all involved stakeholders. If discussing this issue separately, we can see direct and indirect influence of the company on community, on society in general. There are so many aspects involved into this. It is more complicated than it might seem, because they are human-beings, who make it all possible, and how lead it forward. Below there is a table for a better representation of the transformation of 5 P’s into 5 C’s.

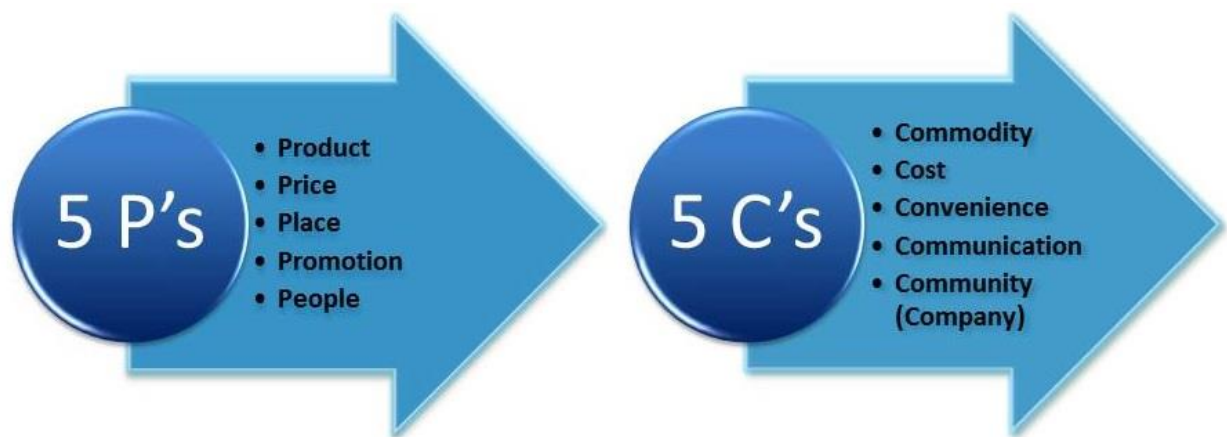


FIGURE 7. Marketing Mix model of 5 P’s transforming into 5 C’s

There is one more important aspect that is required to be discussed. It is the demographic group of customers of Renshaw Travel. Obviously, the company is trying to keep its “fresh” look by constant updates and minor changes in design of the front page of the official website, as well as social media networks. This is essential to attract younger audience and show the company’s development. Otherwise, if there are no changes, it may seem as no development and, thus, no progress.

Fresh look is necessary to attract more young people, who can afford luxury travel. Definitely, the first thing you might think is that luxury travel is for more mature audience, for wealthy people with a certain set of hobbies. According to the respondents' replies, it is true. Based on replies that we have received, the demographic group of Renshaw Travel consumers are people with income of CAD \$100,000 and more, whose hobbies and interests are "hiking, tennis golf, gardening, photography, cycling, health and wellness" (according to one of the respondents). Besides, if the average time of purchase of a new service is three or four times a year, it is certainly true that their income must be of the mentioned amount of money.

As for age, our respondents state that their customers are people who are of age 40 or older. However, based on the respondents' replies as well, there are many exceptions. It is especially good for the company, because the age group is shifting, bringing new people into the company. New customers are the future loyal consumers, which is quite clear to Renshaw Travel. Younger customers are viewed as a certain development of the company's operations and promotion, in particular. Positive word-of-mouth works well for the company, but it is mostly targeting more mature audience, whereas massive use of social media networks is targeting younger audience. Therefore, the online presence is crucial for the company's future more than its present. It is a long-term vision, which is taken into consideration, when relying on social media a lot.

What comes to the company's customers' wealth, it is quite clear that Canadians are rather wealthy and can afford trips abroad. Year by year a number of travels and nights spent in different countries is increasing. According to the Statistics Canada, even starting from 2008, when the crisis occurred, Canadians did not stop traveling (Statistics Canada, 2013). They did directly the opposite thing; they started to travel a lot. Some psychological studies show that people, who travel a lot and gain more positive emotions, are capable to work and perform better and, thus, increase their own wealth. Perhaps, that was one of the reasons that luxury travel business experienced such a growth during the past couple of years.

Summing up, it is necessary to point out that all small pieces of various aspects of Renshaw Travel's operational activities create and maintain this kind of business. The company is influenced by different stakeholders (but mainly customers), by different social media, which set the tone for the online world, and by circumstances, which do take place from time to time. It is life.

Renshaw Travel is trying to combine its own expertise, fresh ideas, good connections and partnerships, in order to keep its business “alive” and profitable to be able to continue, and, of course, to stay true to its core values.

4.1.1 Industry accreditation

Renshaw Travel has good partnerships with major luxury representatives of the industry. First of all, it is a Virtuoso member, which is announced on the company’s home page. Secondly, it is a preferred partner of Four Seasons Hotels and Resorts, which is also shown on the website. Thirdly, it is a member of Orient-Express Hotels and Resorts Bellini Club. It also has partnerships with other hotels and resorts, which are going to be introduced further on. All these major partners help Renshaw Travel to make its business possible. Mutual contracts and established relationships with them prove hard work and great cooperation between all partners.

As a matter of fact, it makes sense to get familiar with the most important partners of Renshaw Travel, i.e. Virtuoso, Four Seasons Hotels and Resorts, Orient-Express Hotels and Resorts, Aman Resorts, The Dorchester Collection, and Fairmont Hotels and Resorts.

Virtuoso

Virtuoso is “the travel industry’s leading luxury network” (Virtuoso.com). Renshaw Travel is a proud Virtuoso member. Basically, it means that when customers book their travel through Renshaw Travel, they receive (as a reward) “exclusive travel services and products not accessible” on their own or through some other travel agencies (Renshawtravel.com).

This is the core advantage of being a Virtuoso member. Customers always receive value-added extras to their accommodation in different hotels, which from the augmented service become expected. Luxury customers easily become addicted to such extras and luxury travel agencies have to come up with new offers every time. And it becomes possible with help of Virtuoso, as well.

Moreover, Virtuoso is a great source of new customers for Renshaw Travel. According to the respondents’ replies, the company finds new clientele from Virtuoso, as well. It is a good

source, a so-called “luxury data-base” of clients. Being a member, Renshaw Travel exploits all possible opportunities from this mutual partnership, and it helps the business to exist and develop.

Four Seasons Hotels and Resorts

“Four Seasons Preferred Partner program is an exclusive, invitation-only network of travel specialists from around the world who share a mutual commitment to experiences of exceptional quality” (Fourseasons.com). With this exclusive program customers receive additional added-value benefits.

Being a Preferred Partner of Four Seasons Hotels and Resorts means being among the luxury field of activities; in other words, being on top of the luxury world. Renshaw Travel trusts its partner and, thus, can be sure that its customers are provided with the highest level of quality service.

Definitely, being a Preferred Partner is a privilege for many luxury travel agencies, and Renshaw Travel proved its ability to be a good partner through the years. It is crucial to have well established relationships with partners in order to make your business profitable and viable. Four Seasons Hotels and Resorts are well known and have good reputation. Thus, the chain of Four Seasons Hotels and Resorts is expecting to have proper clientele, which can afford such luxury accommodation. Renshaw Travel constantly brings new appropriate guests into the hotel. Such cooperation is beneficial for both partners and gives its great results over the years.

Orient-Express Hotels and Resorts

Orient-Express Hotels and Resorts are another luxury chain of hotels and resorts worldwide. This chain has a little different focus, which makes it so unique. Membership in Orient-Express Bellini Club gives certain privilege to the customers, for instance, special amenities upon arrival and during the stay in the hotel.

Orient-Express Hotels and Resorts offer various rail journeys, river cruises and so on. It makes this chain so different. Definitely, it is true; based on the name of the chain, it is supposed to be something unique and interesting for the clientele.

The Dorchester Collection

Beside the above mentioned partners, Renshaw Travel is a member of the exclusive Diamond Club with The Dorchester Collection. The Dorchester is a luxury hotel operator, which provides marvelous service. Such cooperation gives the company an opportunity to provide its customers with exclusive valuable amenities.

This chain of hotels is very iconic and prestigious. Its Diamond Club is an “exclusive, invitation-only network of high-end travel consultants from around the world” (DC Diamond Club). Such membership is another advantage for Renshaw Travel to promote its partner, while promoting itself.

Aman Resorts

In addition to the well-known partners, Renshaw Travel also has partnership with Aman Resorts. Aman Resorts mostly concentrate on a luxury lifestyle. This cooperation gives the company an opportunity of new directions for its clientele. Nice resorts complement the list of countries and offered services.

The Fairmont Hotels and Resorts

The Fairmont Hotels and Resorts do not participate in the “Preferred Partners” program, and they are not mentioned as a partner on the official website of Renshaw Travel; though, they are a good partner of Renshaw Travel.

As learned from the interview, Fairmont is often offered as an option for customers. Some specific destinations may be covered by the Fairmont Hotels and Resorts only, or it can be the best suitable option for a customer. However, the Fairmont chain is listed in the magazine published by Virtuoso (also available in the online format). According to the respondents’ replies, the Fairmont chain is very important for Renshaw Travel and a good partner. The Fairmont chain is also a luxury chain of hotels and resorts, which presents itself independently.

In the *Virtuoso* magazine the Fairmont chain is illustrated as one of the best luxury hotels and resorts chain (Nxtbook.com). It is quite easy to see very exotic and “home” destinations. Fairmont offers luxury accommodation in various countries with a high level of service. Canadian destinations are especially popular among the Fairmont chain due to certain reasons. Thus, it is attractive even to Canadians willing to travel to almost local or “home” destinations. As for the partnership between Renshaw Travel and the Fairmont Hotels and Resorts, it proved to be very stable and beneficial.

Summing up, it is important to mention that it is possible to deepen into the topic of hotels (hospitality in general); though, it is not the main focus of this thesis. Such good and strong partnerships are a part of the Renshaw Travel’s DNA. It is something that the company can always rely on.

4.1.2 Renshaw Travel’s Competitors in luxury travel business

Discussing the company’s DNA, we, definitely, should look at its competitors within the same business area. In this particular case we are going to concentrate on luxury travel agencies, located in Vancouver (British Columbia) only, where Renshaw Travel is situated.

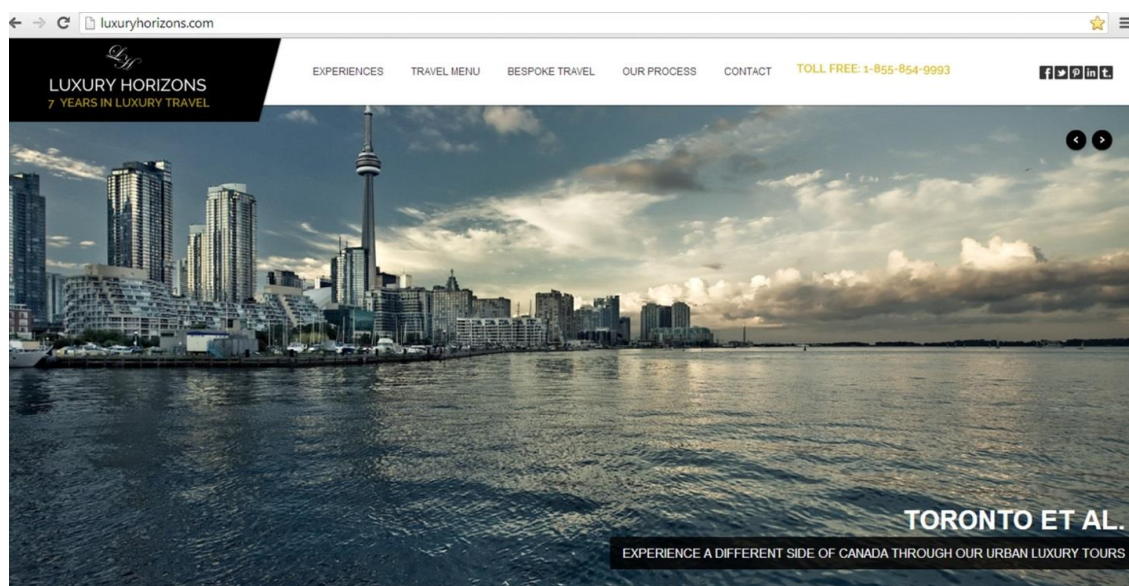
Better understanding of one’s rivals helps to analyze your own operations, modify direction, and foresee the forthcoming changes in trends and, therefore, in demand. It is very crucial to be aware of what is going on in the market, because that is where your customers are searching.

In our thesis we are going to focus on several luxury travel agencies, which provide the same or the most similar service as Renshaw Travel. To find and choose the required companies among the pool of different agencies, we had to narrow down our search parameters. We used Google search engine to find luxury travel agencies in Vancouver, British Columbia. The search showed a list of the companies, which were offering different services. Among them we excluded those, which were offering luxury services as one of the additional offers for customers, who can afford them. It was done to be more precise, because Renshaw Travel specializes in luxury travel mainly, even though, it is capable to offer and sell the so-called “regular” service.

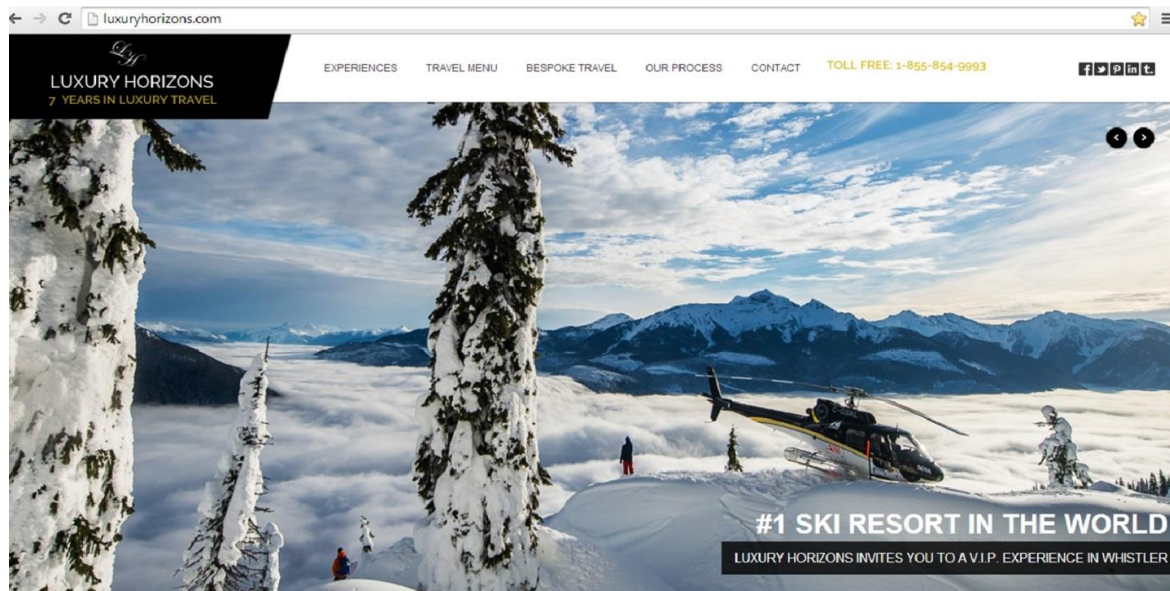
Once we had sorted out the companies on the list, we saw only five companies, which were suitable to our criteria. Renshaw Travel was among them; therefore, we have only four viable and strong competitors.

The first company on the list is Luxury Horizons. It is a very good and big company. Based on information available, it is a strong competitor to Renshaw Travel. It is hard to find any particular information on the official website concerning the headquarters; however, the company's business profile on LinkedIn clearly indicates its location as Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada.

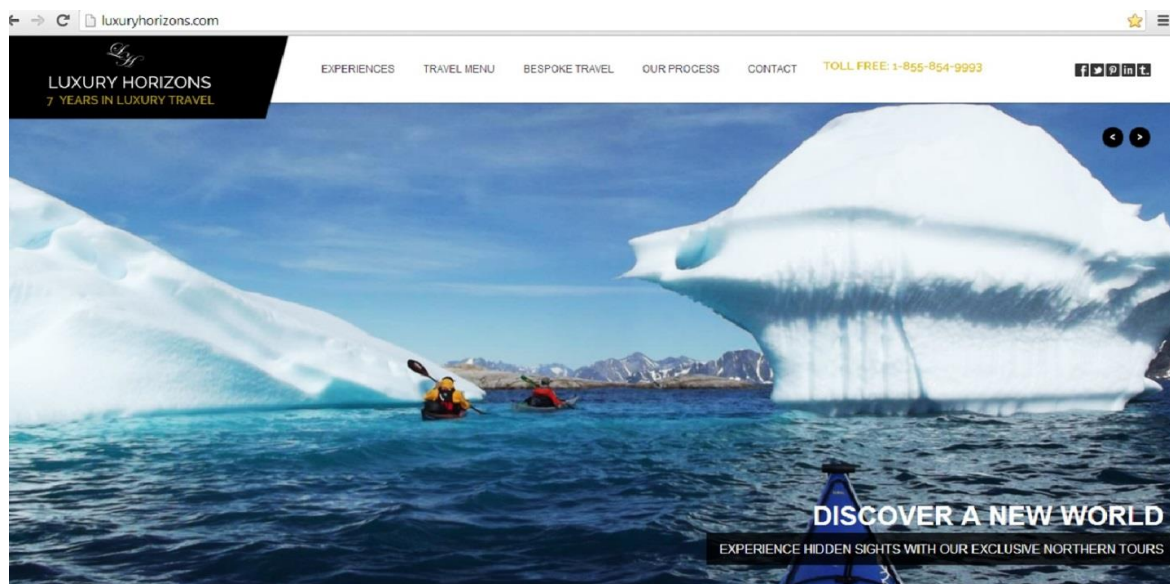
The home page of the website has five different constantly changing pictures. Navigation is quite simple and interface is attractive to users. There are print screen pictures of the home page of the website below. The major purpose of these pictures is to make it easier to compare all discussed websites, based on their visibility as well.



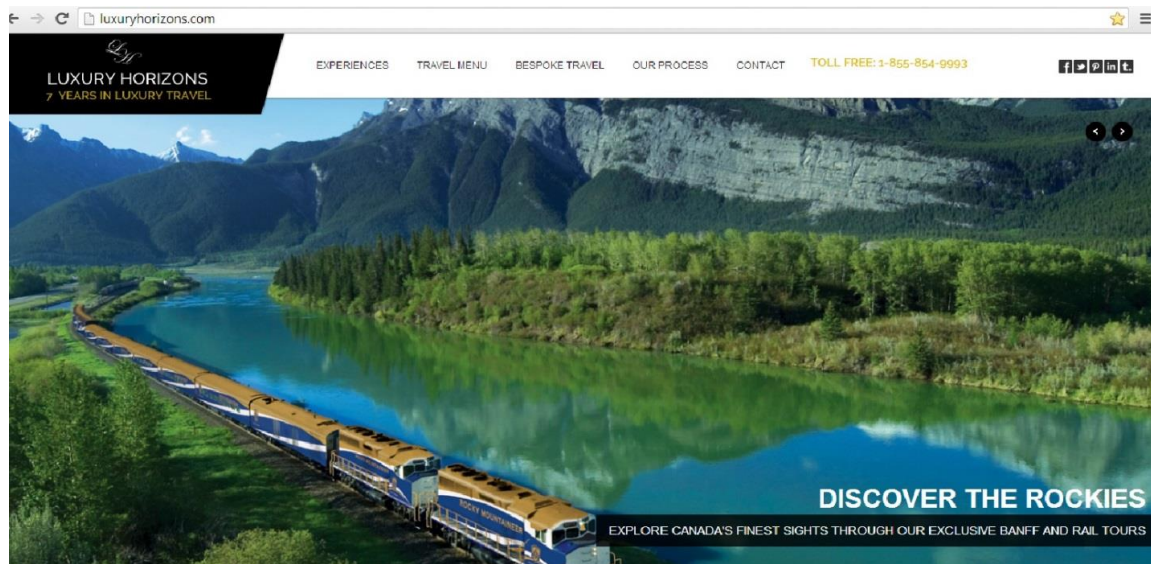
PICTURE 1. Home page of <http://luxuryhorizons.com>



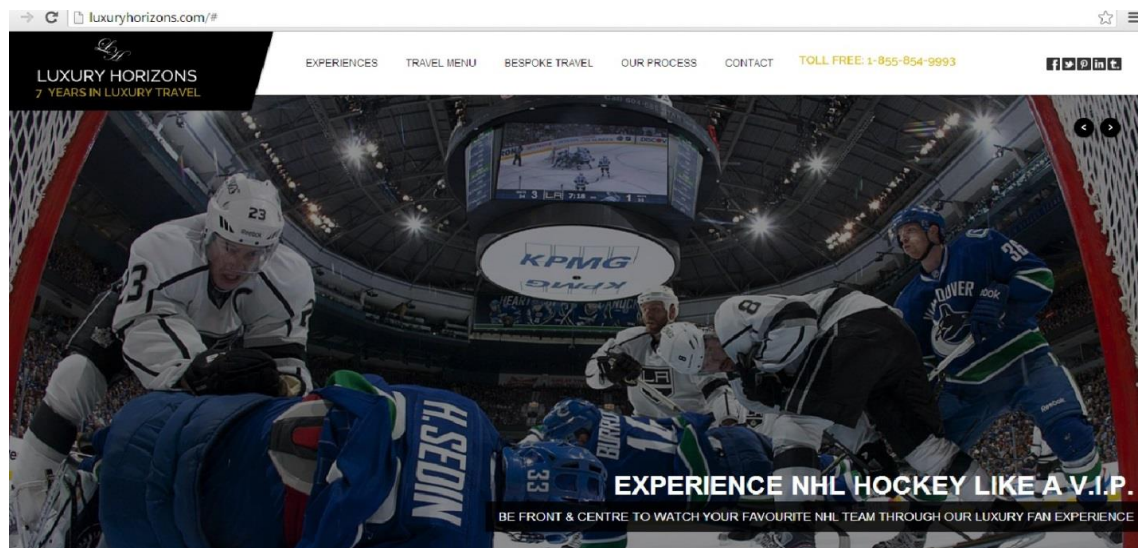
PICTURE 2. Home page of <http://luxuryhorizons.com>



PICTURE 3. Home page of <http://luxuryhorizons.com>



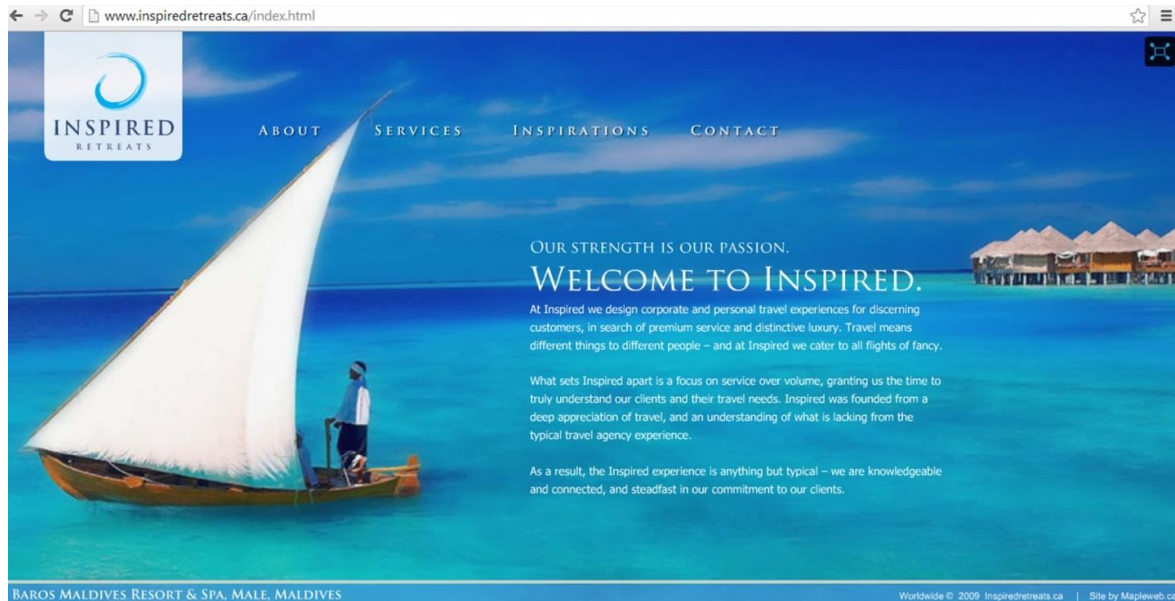
PICTURE 4. Home page of <http://luxuryhorizons.com>



PICTURE 5. Home page of <http://luxuryhorizons.com>

As for the second company on the list, here comes Inspired Retreats. This is also a quite big and strong competitor for Renshaw Travel. The website is also very nice and attractive for customers. It has its information in the Contact Us section, where the location is clearly shown as Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada.

The home page of the website has just one picture. Our assumption is that the company changes its home page picture from time to time. If waiting for long enough, we would be able to find it out, though, it is not the purpose of this thesis. We aimed at showing what customers see, when they open the website. There is a print screen of the home page of the company below.



PICTURE 6. Home page of <http://www.inspiredretreats.ca>

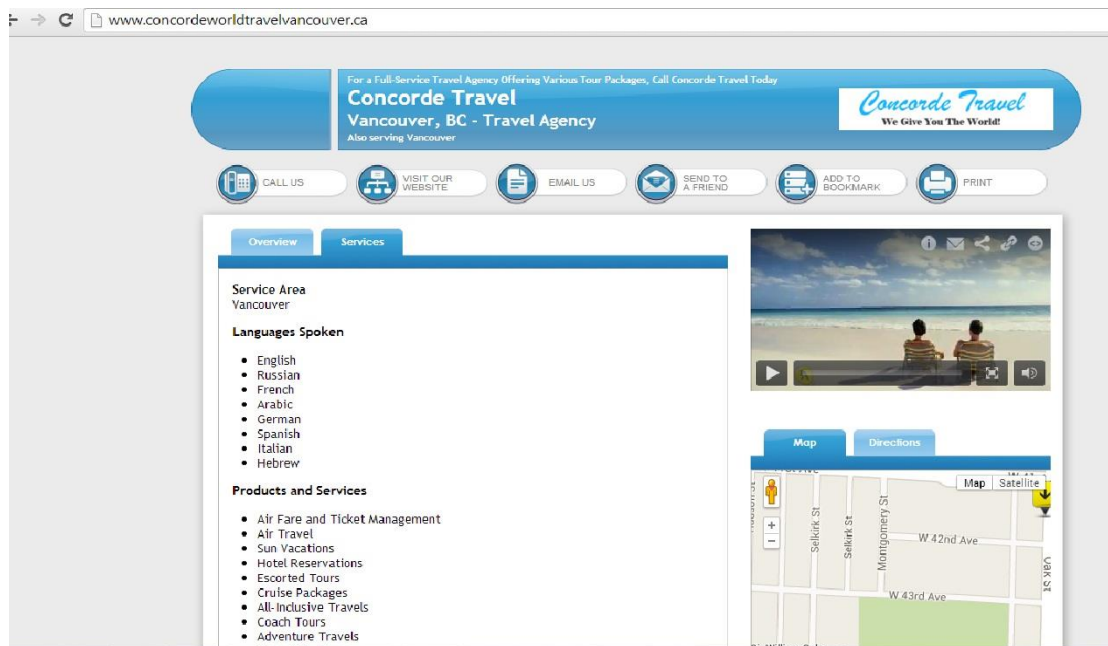
What comes to the third company on the list, it is North South Travel. The company has a professionally made website, as well. It has easy navigation with lots of pictures and information on location, which is Vancouver, British Columbia, as expected.

Below is the print screen of the home page of this website. It reflects the way customers see it. The company is proudly showing that it is a partner of Virtuoso, as well as Renshaw Travel.



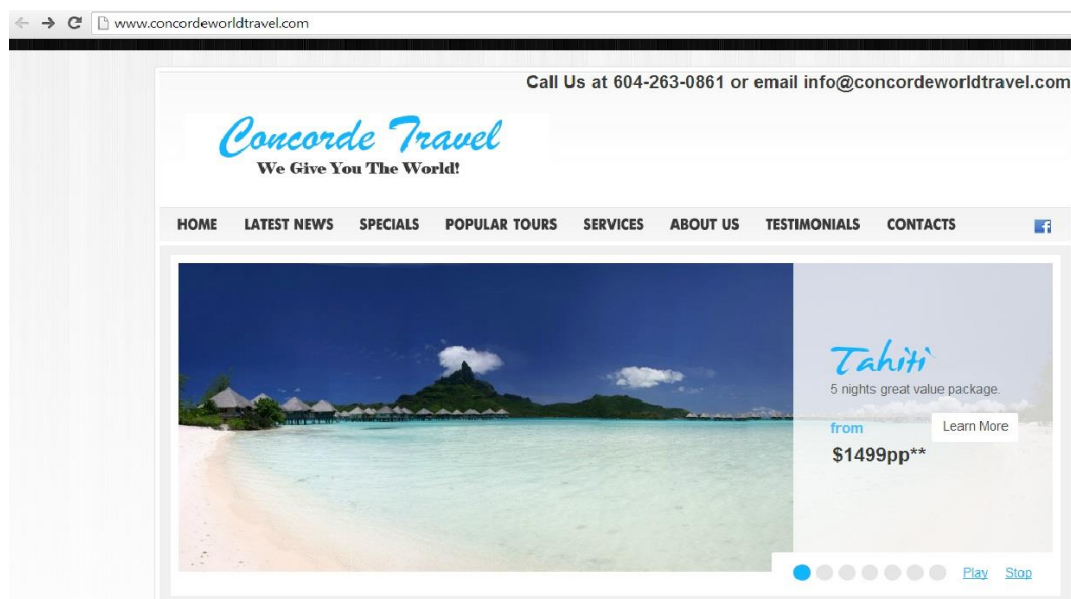
PICTURE 7. Home page of <http://www.northsouthtravel.com/>

And last but not least is Concorde Travel. This company is located in Vancouver, British Columbia, just like all the above mentioned ones. However, its website does not specifically indicate luxury travel as its major field of activities. Below is the print screen of it.



PICTURE 8. Home page of <http://www.concordeworldtravelvancouver.ca/>

The website is rather poor than rich in terms of pictures and information. It more looks like a blog than a luxury travel agency's website. Even if you follow the link, you get to a very similar common website, which is mostly the same, but the URL does not indicate Canada. This second website has more attractive appeal. Here is another print screen below.



PICTURE 9. Home page of <http://www.concordeworldtravel.com/>

It is worth to mention that all of the presented websites have different pictures in their sections; therefore, they have a very attractive menu for customers and look more professional. More thorough analysis of the competitors is going to be conducted in the following chapter, which focuses on results.

4.2 Renshaw Travel's online presence and visibility

Undoubtedly, it is crucial for any luxury travel business to have its online presence as well as the real one, or so-called “offline” presence. Many companies manage to increase their sales due to proper actions taken in the online market space, where they have a little more freedom and can be always with and for customers in terms of time. The online world also means access for customers 24/7. Due to a huge time difference around the world, companies need to be sure that their customers as well as potential customers have easy and free access to the website to be able to get familiar with and purchase a service.

This massive online presence led to a huge marketing battle field, where companies strive to get more visibility by all possible means. The more visibility you have on the Internet, the more chances you have to sell you service, products, or anything they might offer. It is quite crucial to understand that, because “...all aggressive marketing in the next few years will be in the online space. If you are not there, you may be assured that your competitors will be” (Harden, Heyman 2009, 5).

It is also a matter of pressure to “keep innovating in the luxury market. Things that are luxury today quickly become the standard tomorrow...”, and the pace of this happening becomes higher and higher (Danziger 2005, 5). Companies have to keep up with such pace in order to succeed or at least to remain their positions on the same good level. Fierce competition pushes innovation in every possible aspect of this business, as well as of some related businesses.

Companies also understand that nowadays “luxury is no longer about the thing anymore; it is all about the experience” (Danziger 2005, 273). Therefore, they try to make their website look more attractive and visible, simpler and faster in terms of navigation. It is quite crucial in terms of purchase, because the purpose of any company is to sell and make this way from the moment when a customer reviews the web page to the moment of purchase shorter. If the cus-

customer is not satisfied enough or even irritated with the company's online presence, it can damage the reputation and business operations in general.

Being well visible is essential, but the website solely is not enough. Companies create their profiles on the most popular social media networks to have their presence everywhere, so that customers could see and reach them faster and easier. Besides, there is a question of a good experience for customers, i.e. if it is pleasant and easy to purchase a service, product or anything else, being in the online world, and how companies utilize their abilities. Customers want to remember the process of purchasing something, as much as having what they own after that. Therefore, "it's not about purchasing a unique thing, it's about this purchase, which is surrounded by the "unique shopping experience" (Danziger 2005, 4).

Based on this quite obvious theoretical framework, we can discover, which social media networks Renshaw Travel has its online presence on. Beside the official website of the company, Renshaw Travel has its profile, first of all, on Facebook. It is a popular website, where you can entertain your friends, customers, or visitors. As for activity on Facebook, Renshaw Travel is not absolutely active there. From a print screen below we can see only 172 likes on the page. It proves that the company does not focus on this particular social medium solely.



PICTURE 10. Profile page of Renshaw Travel on Facebook

Here we can conclude that this Facebook page serves the company as an additional source of visibility but not the main one. Obviously, many companies focus on Facebook a lot more than Renshaw Travel due to their specific field of activities.

What comes to Twitter, Renshaw Travel pays special attention to this social medium; thus, it is quite active there. Twitter itself is a good source of visibility; however, it consumes much time to add constant updates, keep up with new tweets, re-tweets, replies, and different reaction of the audience. However, once gained good visibility, there is a need to keep it on the same level, it is essential for all companies. Even though, Twitter does not actually bring much help nor does it make any online or offline sales, but it does bring visibility, which makes your customers see you and your company's website, thus, raising up profits.



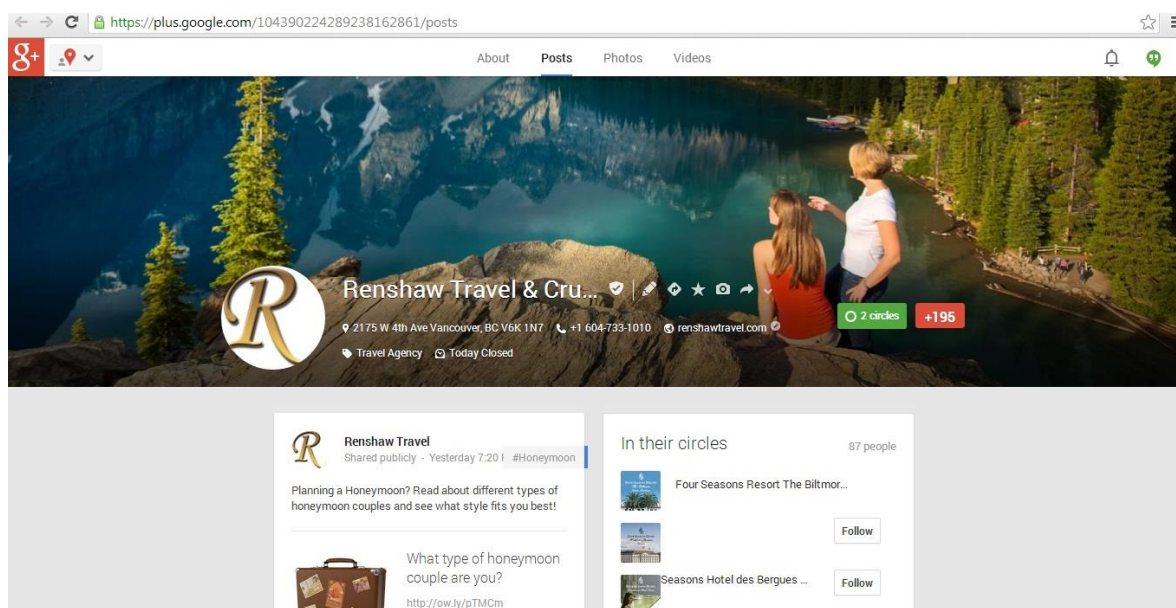
PICTURE 11. Profile page of Renshaw Travel on Twitter

Being quite a new network, Twitter has gained incredible popularity and involved a lot of people, who became users. It is impossible to make any sales or purchases on Twitter at the moment, but it, certainly, may become an option in the nearest future. It can be compared with a person standing on the street and inviting people to the office. This network is extremely useful for this purpose, but it does not really say much about your company nor does it provide detailed description of your company's products or services.

We interview several persons from Renshaw Travel; we asked different questions, which are going to help us to get a deeper insight of the company's operations. One of the questions was

concerning the future of social media networks in Renshaw Travel's practices. It was clearly confirmed that the company's course is the same to be stick to social media, but to remember about personal talk, which their clients always seek, which is "hardly possible on Twitter".

The next social media network, which is very essential for Renshaw Travel is Google+. The company is very active on it; besides, Google can easily connect with other services, which gives a lot of opportunities for customers as well as the company itself. Moreover, according to the replies received from some employees of Renshaw Travel, Google+ is seen as one of the most promising networks.

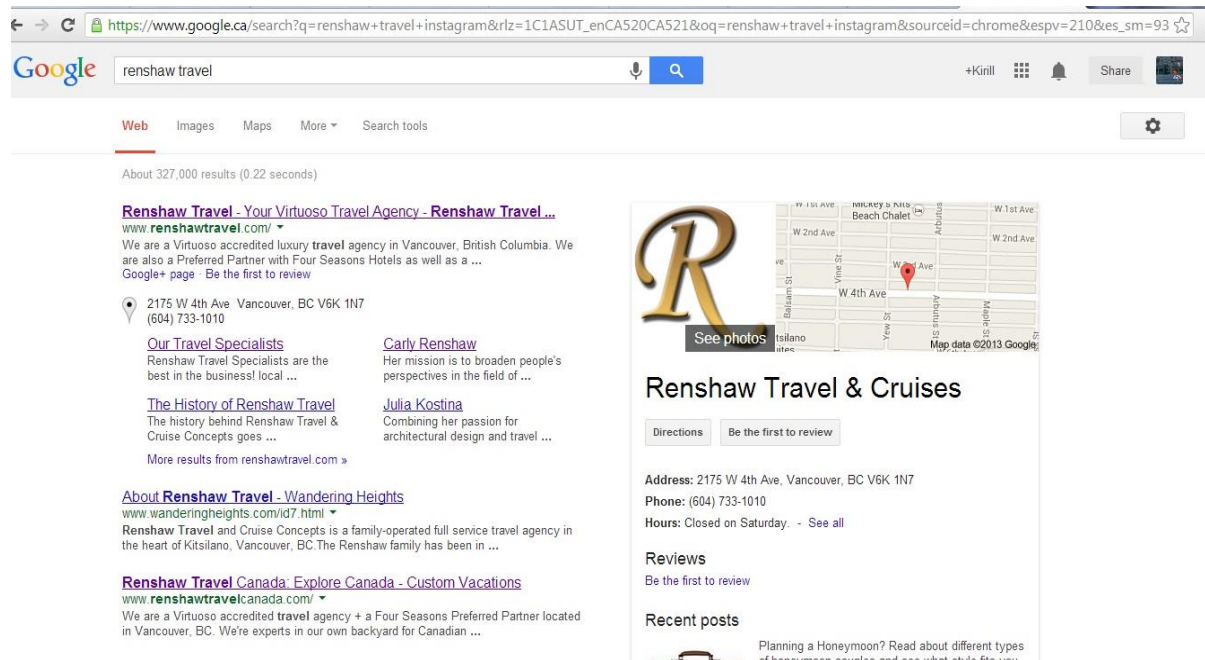


PICTURE 12. Profile page of Renshaw Travel on Google+

Google+ is basically an attempt to mix different networks into one and make it also linked to some other networks. It is quite beneficial for Renshaw Travel, because Google, as a search engine, is widely used around the globe. When people search for Renshaw Travel, they basically see lots of links to those networks, which the company has its presence on, and Google+, in particular.

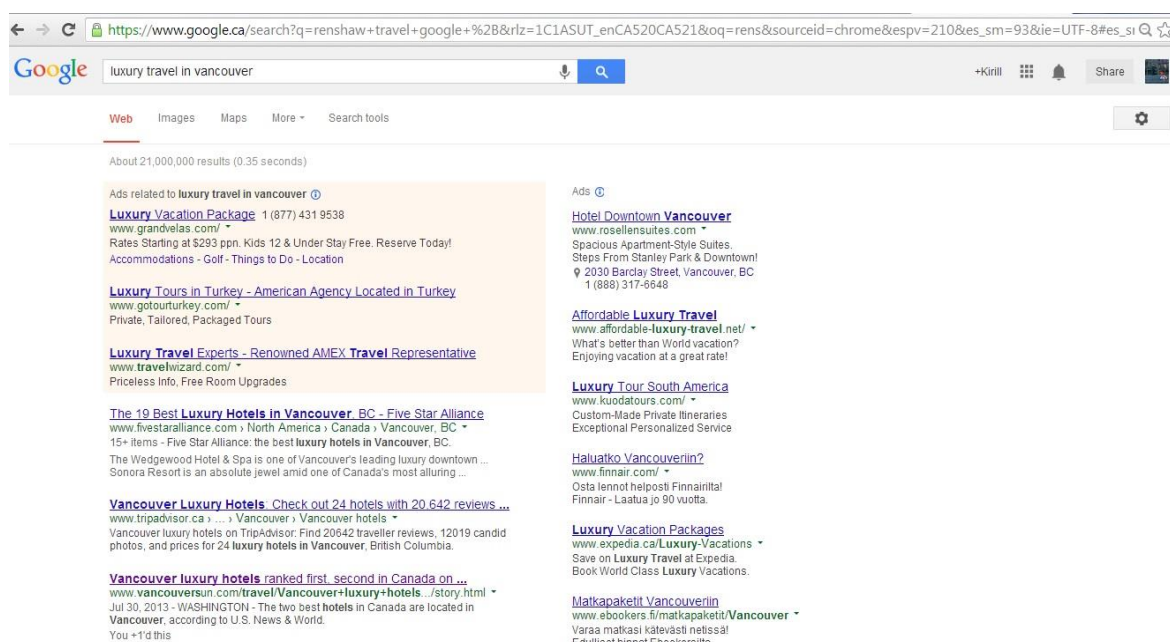
On a wider note, as people from all over the world tend to use the best known search engine "Google", which is not only famous but also quite suitable for different purposes, companies may gain better visibility simply being on the first two pages of search. When typing Renshaw Travel in the search field, the first result you see is the official website of the company. Then follow the other social media, which are very popular among different age and income groups.

Basically, the whole first search page is dedicated to Renshaw, which indicates rather good performance.



PICTURE 13. Renshaw Travel on Google search engine (with “Renshaw travel” as key words)

As for the more general search, such as “travel agency in Vancouver” or “luxury travel” and “luxury travel in Vancouver”, the first page of the search engine indicates Renshaw Travel, however, not in the first line. This somehow reflects the need of a better visibility for the company on Google and evaluation on how well the company is utilizing the use of keyword glossary, if doing at all on regular intervals. This is one of the aspects to be considered as future improvements.



PICTURE 14. Renshaw Travel on Google search engine (with “luxury travel in Vancouver” as key words)

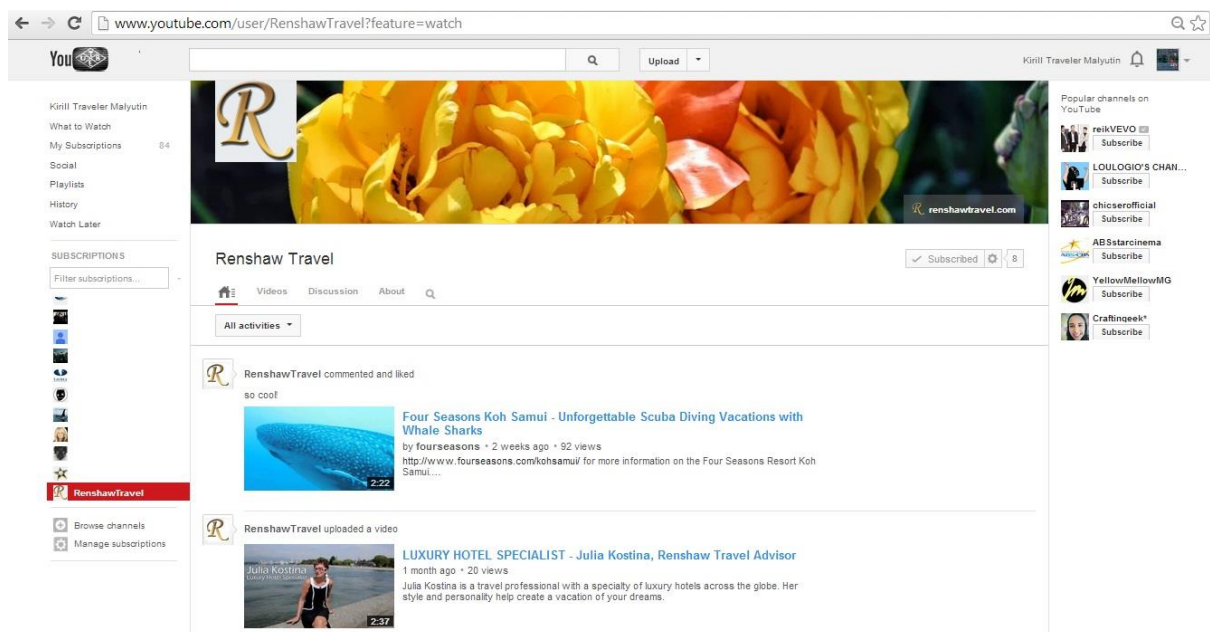
Google is a good source for Renshaw Travel not only when it comes to search, but also as a service connected to some other networks, for example, YouTube. There is another opportunity from Google. Since Google owns YouTube, good visible presence on this network might be a good idea for consideration. Due to Google’s constant innovation and new ideas, it may easily come up with something extraordinary or unexpected, which can attract even more viewers.

Companies which want to profit from using the Internet and social media in particular should constantly monitor Google’s development and be capable to modify its advertising so that it could fit a new service and is visible for a larger number of people. This is a very essential issue, since Google is now the biggest and major search engine, storage of information and innovator.

YouTube is, undoubtedly, a very entertaining, interesting and rapidly growing and developing network; however, the company is quite new on this social medium and has a few videos posted only. It is a good field for Renshaw Travel as this network becomes extremely popular all around the world.

As for Renshaw Travel, it is easy to see a number of views of each videos and a number of likes for each video. It is clear that the company does not pay enough attention to this social

media. This could raise visibility greatly; however, the company has rather poor performance on YouTube at the moment.



PICTURE 15. Profile page of Renshaw Travel on YouTube

Such poor performance on YouTube is a bit strange and unexpected. It is especially surprising due to such popularity of the network. Besides, if we take a closer look at YouTube and particularly one of its services (and as a separate channel) Vevo, we can see its rapidly growing influence and development. Nowadays, most of the singers, groups are seeking to have partnership with it to be able to upload their music videos onto Vevo and be among the most viewed videos (Lawler, 2013).

This service made a huge leap into a new field where not the service offers an “opportunity” to be seen, but artists seek the way to be among the “elite” of the YouTube world. Vevo has evolved greatly and it has now a TV-channel, but it also has its own competition among the mostly viewed videos. This wave of dependence on Vevo in some ways may be compared with iPhones and related stuff. Slowly but truly the service is developing and adding new operational areas. Perhaps, someday it will be able to host some of the videos for travel agencies. However, the criteria for videos will be the same as for music videos, i.e. quality, and how demanded it is on the market.

Since Vevo became a huge rival to music industry, it can consider capturing new areas; in case if it applies to luxury travel agencies, it might be another exclusive for the company, which might make a huge advantage, being kind of a privilege.

What comes to Tumblr, we have not found any trace of the company's presence on that social media network. Perhaps, the audience is not really appropriate for luxury travel business and it is not worth spending time for. Besides, Tumblr is "the end of your social life" (Urban Dictionary).

The next on the list is Skype, which is widely used by people in all corners of the world. However, Renshaw Travel does not use this social medium in its operations. We interviewed a couple of employees and the reply was the same "No, we don't use it". In case if the company used Skype in its operations, it would need to use a paid option of the service to have a perfect quality all day long and a possibility for a conference call. This would be the major criteria for the company if using Skype, because Renshaw Travel positions itself as a luxury travel agency.

Discovering other fields of social media, we have not found any trace of the company's presence on Livejournal, MySpace or Vimeo. These networks could be a reasonable source for marketing, because each one of them is suitable for this purpose. For example, on Livejournal specialists of Renshaw Travel could post their stories anonymously or under their own names, describing their experiences and journeys. This could attract people's attention and, thus, bring more people on the company's webpage. As for MySpace, it would be simple interaction with others, which could bring more visitors to www.renshawtravel.com. What come to Vimeo, it is a good opportunity for the company to post its high quality videos beside YouTube. The more sources are in use, the better it is for the company. Perhaps, Renshaw Travel does not pay enough attention to these social media at the moment or simply has not considered them as worth trying and spending time for.

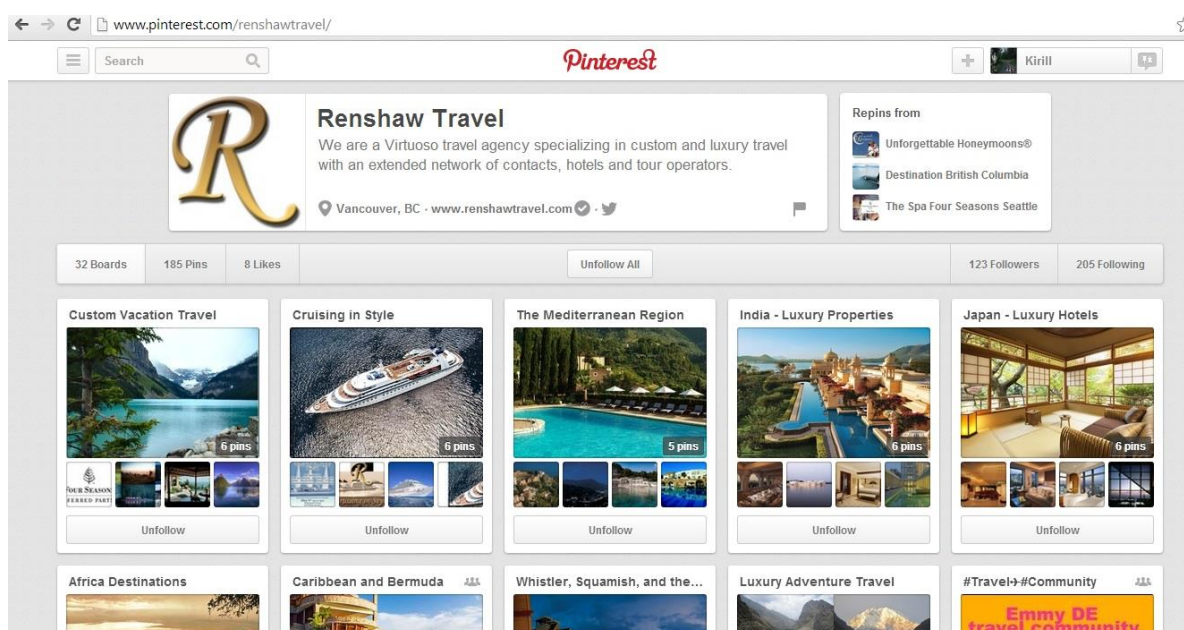
We were very much surprised when we could not find Renshaw Travel on Instagram. It was something unexpected, because this service is extremely popular especially among iPhone users. Perhaps, it is the demographical group, which is too young for the company. According to some Renshaw Travel specialists, the age group comprises people, whose age is 40 and older. However, according to the same specialists, there might be exceptions, when young

people consume this service. Therefore, it is still a little unclear for us, why this network is not in use by the company. We did not have a new opportunity to ask that question, because we received the company's reply back later than we could expect. Our time limits would not allow us any further interviews due to time difference and not so rapid replies. Therefore, we can only predict and hope they will use this service someday.

The following social media network is very similar to Instagram, though, it is different. It is Pinterest. Renshaw Travel has its profile on this network, which brings them a certain number of visitors to the official website. A simple look at the front page may reflect, how many people like it and how many follow it. Currently, it seems that the company is following more pages than having followers. It is supposed to be the other way round; however, the situation in this network is way better than some others.

As a means of entertainment in marketing, Pinterest can be considered as the most attractive one. You can share and re-pin pictures you like, you can also put some information to the uploaded picture, which directs you to the official website, and also just have fun and visibility through people, who follow you or share your pictures. It is also a free advertisement, which works and works great. This element of fun works for the company, which uses this social medium.

Instagram in this sense is limited by the "profile's" own pictures. Either it is a company, or an individual, it is the same usage of the medium. The profiles shares pictures and people can see them, like them, but not copy them so that this visibility is limited by the profiles only. Moreover, to find you people need to know about you, whereas on Pinterest you can be also found by accident, luckily when somebody re-pins your pictures and spreads them in the online world.



PICTURE 16. Profile page of Renshaw Travel on Pinterest

We also tried to search for any presence on StumbleUpon, but there is no trace of it. This network is out of the company's focus due to obvious reasons. It is not good enough for the audience, which Renshaw Travel is counting on.

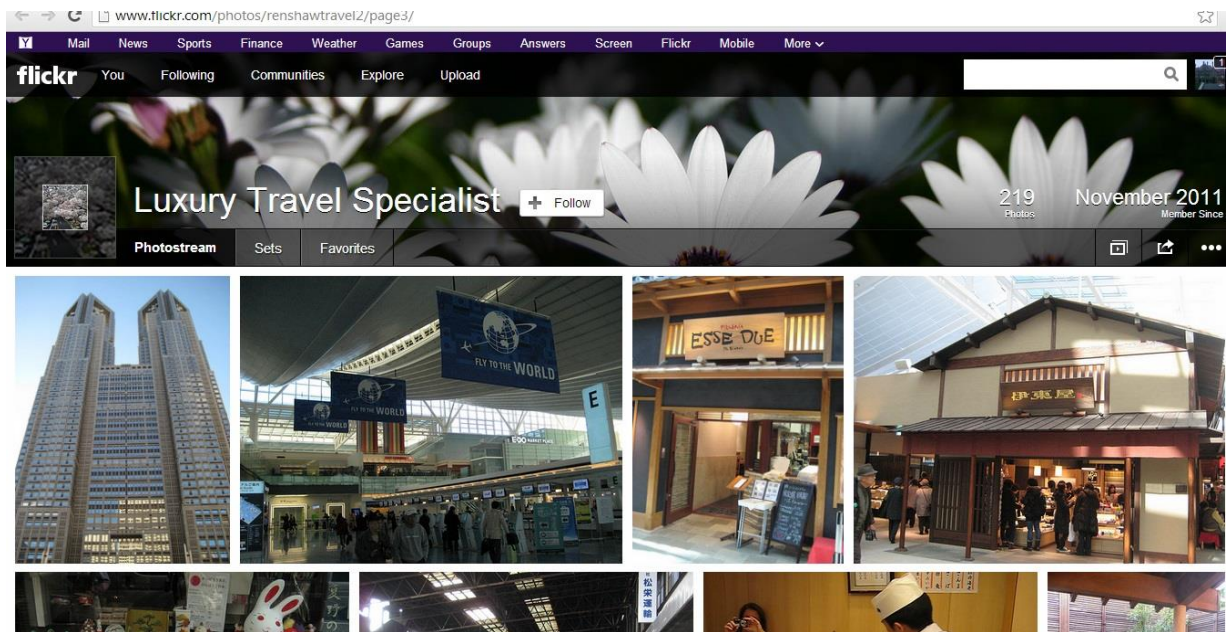
The following social media network is VK, or VKontakte. It is a Russian analog of Facebook with some different features. This is a number one website in Russia nowadays. However, Renshaw Travel does not have any presence on it at all. The audience is considered inappropriate for it. People, who are of the age 40 or older, usually do not waste their time on it. Besides, it is more for young people, who spend time on virtual communication, instead of being in the real world. As for those young people, who can afford luxury services, they mostly are not aware of Renshaw Travel. It more works as a word-of-mouth rather than as via social media.

As mentioned above, VK, or Vkontakte, is more of an entertainment website, which, of course, has advertisements and commerce taking place. However, Facebook seems more solid, massive in comparison with VK. Perhaps, that is the major reason for Renshaw Travel not to spend time on this social media network at all.

What come to Blogger, it is quite clear that this network is part of Google and using Google+, Google or anything else that is related to it, you can use Blogger as well. Renshaw Travel has an option of comments using Blogger, which is a good thing to do. This option gives visitors

more freedom to share, express their thoughts and feelings. Though, it is not the most useful marketing tool.

As for Flickr, Renshaw Travel has its profile on this network, although, it is not clear what purpose it, actually, has. On this page we have not found any useful information, but except a link to the official website. The page itself looks pretty poor and abandoned. There are only two followers and no activity since 2011, when it joined this network. Besides, Renshaw Travel has two better options, such as Pinterest and/or Instagram. The company is more or less actively utilizing Pinterest for this purpose, and it brings its benefits. Perhaps, the company will not use Flickr in the nearest future at all.

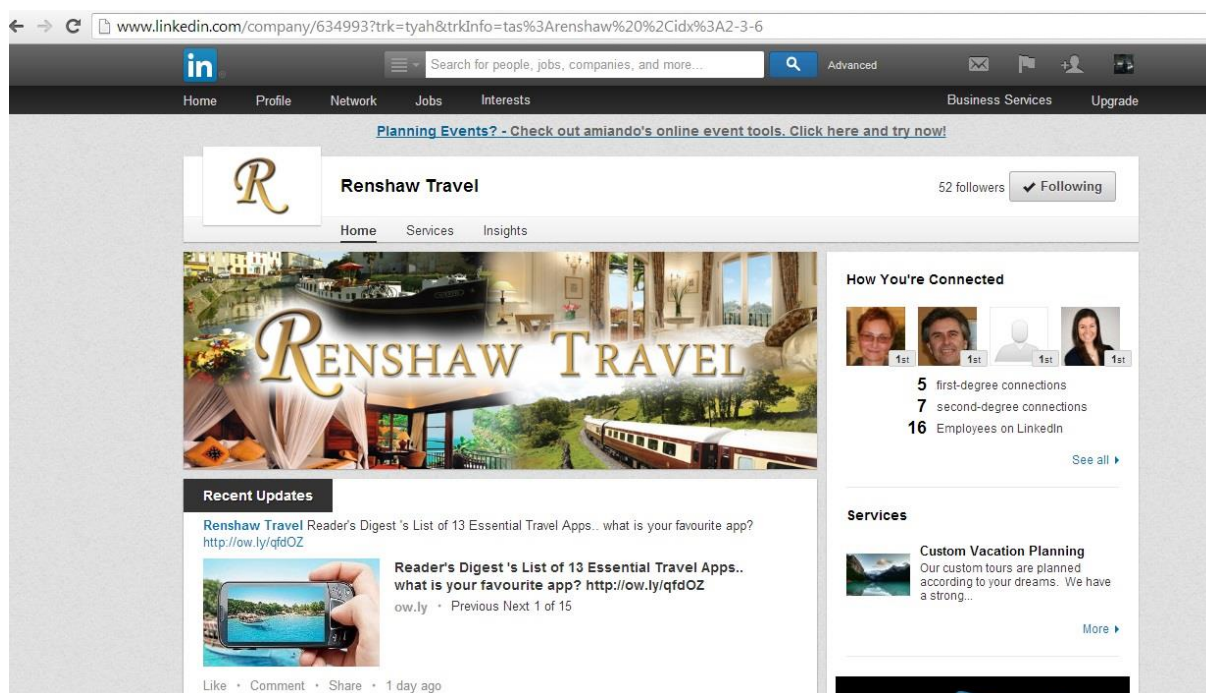


PICTURE 17. Profile page of Renshaw Travel on Flickr

And last but not least among the reviewed social media networks is LinkedIn. LinkedIn is more like your online business card. It is a perfect source to cooperate with companies and be visible to your regular and potential customers.

Renshaw Travel has its profile on LinkedIn. It pays enough attention to this network, as it seems to be one of such kind of networks existing. Actually, it solves several problems and helps with several issues. First of all, it is Renshaw Travel's presentation in the online business world, where anyone can view the company's profile. Besides, it is a business opportunity for the company, because this website is open for anyone, but the initial aim was to gather business people to one place. Thus, Renshaw Travel can have more contacts with customers

and partners, who can afford this luxury service. Moreover, if a person worked or currently works for the company, other people can see it in his or her list of jobs and it is a free source of advertisement.



PICTURE 18. Profile page of Renshaw Travel on LinkedIn

As time passes, social media develop and become more and more popular and important in consumers' lives, as well as for companies trying to promote their services. As a matter of fact, new words appeared particularly in English, i.e. to Google, to Facebook, to Skype, etc. A tendency of replacing capital letter with regular ones on such verbs may affect even future dictionaries, because a lot of new terminology appears with the development of the Internet and social media as such.

Such great influence is creating a certain demand on the online presence, as well as on the visible and rapid online activities. It especially concerns luxury travel agencies, which sometimes have to face fierce competition. "The luxury consumer has shifted from caring about the material element to the unique experiences that make them feel special" (Danziger 2005, 4). Therefore, companies have to provide their customers with the best possible service, including ease of reach via social media. Though, it should be a quality service and quality presentation of the company on social media. People need to feel the same luxury service being on one of the social media networks; otherwise, if not done properly, it can spoil the whole experience.

There is no use to try to be present everywhere on each and every social media network. It is much more effective to choose the most essential ones for the company and to pay more attention to your own and your followers' activity. Being focused on a limited number of social media gives more time to increase the quality of the company's presence. There should be some sense of having a profile on a certain social media network. Let it be one instead of two, but filled up with information and attracting people to your company.

Common remarks on Renshaw Travel's online presence and visibility

Since the technological barriers have lowered exponentially during the past decade, almost anyone with the access to a computer and the Internet can post his or her opinions online. This is where the social media content has faced its largest pitch in user numbers, as many people become more accustomed to the Internet by using social media as their first contact to it.

The emarketer.com states that Facebook has the potential to contact more than 51 per cent of all the Internet users, the highest percentage for any website. The second on that list is Google+ with 26 per cent and as the third comes YouTube (25 per cent), a website that has received a large following of marketers in the last couple of years. The following list is based on the research by Global Web Index on April 26 2013.

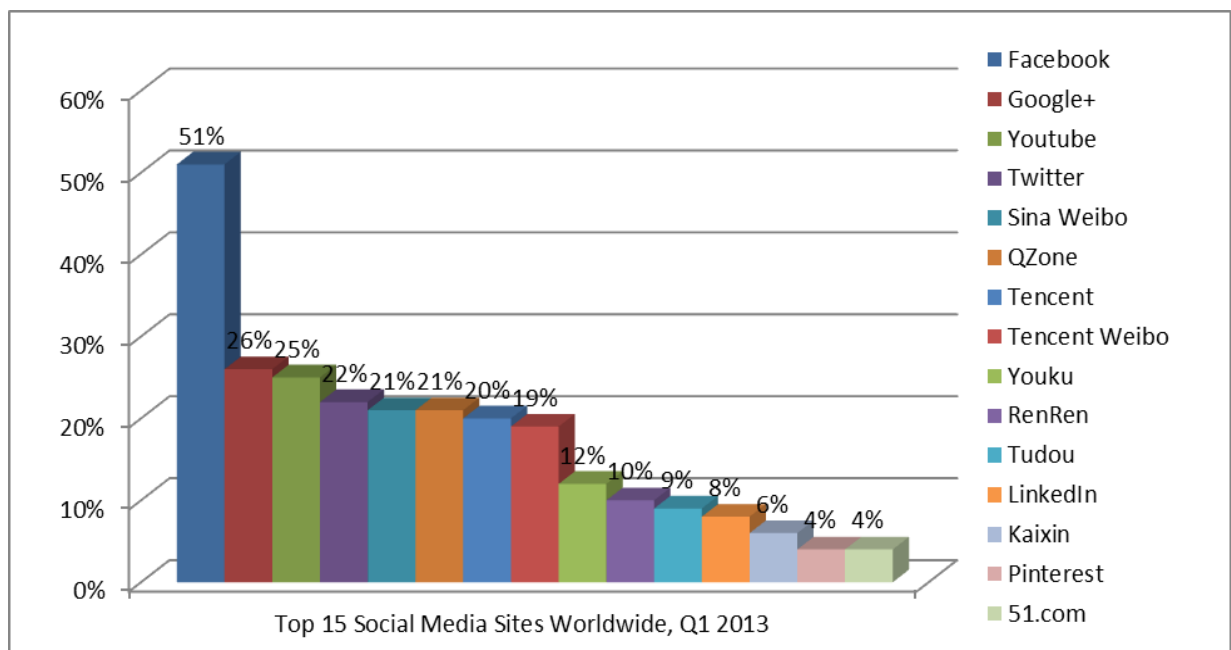


FIGURE 8. List of top 15 social media worldwide

Those numbers do represent a large and approachable group of potential clients, but they also include a large portion of derelict users, people who just stumble upon the website yet do not actually use it on a regular basis or get more acquainted in it. Varying on various sources, but the final estimate as clarified by Mark Zuckerberg himself and numerous other websites, including statisticbrain.com and socialbakers.com, Facebook has an approximate of over 1 billion users worldwide, making it the largest online community in the world when counting in the official, enlisted users. Even though Google+ exceeds in the amount of how often it is logged onto by the public, it still loses to Twitter when looking at the number of activated accounts nowadays with Twitter holding approximately 550 million of them (Statistic Brain, 2013a), while Google+ comes down to mere 50 million less than that (Google Blog, 2012).

After Twitter lots of positions are held by the China-based companies, which are mostly deducible due to the large population and particularly domestically dominated business and social media culture. LinkedIn and Pinterest are certainly losing ground to the bigger names all the while LinkedIn sports an audience of 225 million users, at least according to their own registry. Pinterest has so far of (February 2013) gained 25 million users and actually has grown during the past year (Abramovich, 2013). For Renshaw Travel Twitter shows promise as demonstrated by globalwebindex.com, Canadian Twitter account users rose by almost 18 per cent in number during the first quarter of 2013 (Stream Social: Quarterly Social Platforms Update Q1 2013, April 26 2013).

It is noteworthy to point out as emarketer.com put it: "Growth in social network usage came especially from the mobile phone and tablet". (Which Social Networks Are Growing Fastest Worldwide? (eMarketer, 2013b) Especially Facebook was regarded of having a huge growth in its usage, nearly 47 per cent on PC and mobile, not to mention almost 50 per cent on tablet interfaces. It is a good thing that both lists have top contenders that are relatively consistent to each other, since this is the point where various people may start looking at the billions instead of the per cents. Yes, numbers do matter, but what those numbers contain can mean much more. The statistics above indicate the regularity of log-ins by users within a month, including people from the ages of 16 to 64.

It is no wonder that usually the high-name social networks end up being the first to be experimented upon when a small company tries to garner followers online. Not just to gain new customers, but to rekindle earlier business relationships and further enhance the loyalty to-

wards one's own establishment. Personal experiences in social media rarely excel to the point of using it efficiently to run marketing operations for a company when general management, consistent upkeep of an appealing content and overall system optimization become crucial components to look after. It has not stopped entrepreneurs of using social media as a gateway to less constrained online marketing as 75,8 per cent of all counted internet marketers had set up a Facebook page for their business up until of late 2012 (Meyers, 2013).

Currently internet marketing is facing a change, not due to any revolutionary marketing ploy, but much thanks to the audience itself. During the first quarter of 2013 globalwebindex.com carried out a research identifying the changes that had occurred in the actions of Facebook users (eMarketer, 2013b). With an almost 50 per cent rise were the more expected watching videos by other internet users and sharing links to articles. The third, however, was the act of following a group or liking a page that was brought to existence by a brand. Numerically the rise for this was 40 per cent, but merely for PC. Like for the other two mentioned activities, also in here the numbers were far greater when it came to mobile phone (53 %) and tablet computer (91 %) interfaces. Social media is a wide and spanning medium, but also quite uni-sex. According to burstmedia.com, peculiarly almost every social media network was evenly divided between females and males in North America, this between ages over 18 though. Only larger difference came from Pinterest where women outnumbered the men 4 to 1.

5 RESULTS OF THE RESEARCH

Based on the theoretical framework discussed earlier and detailed analysis of the Renshaw Travel's DNA for this thesis, we are going to conduct some research on the company's activities, including competitors, partners, etc. Basically, the major part of that has already been covered within the company's description, because, all in all, it does include some analysis and research.

For this purpose we decided to be a little more creative, as well as in the previous chapter. First of all, we wanted to see some social media networks from the inside, to "practice" them. Secondly, we considered it to be essential to analyze the official website of Renshaw Travel and compare it with the company's interaction with its customers, followers and potential clients. To make it possible, we contacted some of the company's competitors, in order to conduct a small research on a particular topic.

Therefore, the results of our research concerning Renshaw Travel are going to be presented in this chapter and followed by conclusions and our recommendations.

5.1 Social media networks in practice

Following the theoretical framework, required for this particular thesis, we are going to take a look inside in process of marketing via social media, i.e. we are going to create profiles on some of the most popular networks, where we do not have our presence yet, and start communication with companies and Renshaw Travel as well. Thus, we are going to see how companies respond to their customers' comments, questions, feedback, etc. It is also aimed at better understanding of the whole idea of marketing via social media and the idea of visibility in the online world.

The first step is to find out on which networks Renshaw Travel has its presence. The second step is logically to analyze which of social media are the most popular in the world, and, thus, we can see, which ones the company does not use yet or any longer. Then, we try to create our profiles there and start communication to gain some followers and some visibility. Naturally, we are going to face some minor problems due to different platforms used by devices, for example, to use Instagram we need Android platform, or at least something that has access to it. For this purpose we have several options, such as purchasing a gadget, which has the required platform, asking a friend, who has access to those networks, or simply base our research on plain theory and whatever we find in the Internet. Obviously, purchasing a gadget is a little too expensive for the work and relying on plain theory is not the best suitable option for us; therefore, we are going to ask some friends, who have such devices, to show us the way they work, to practice our knowledge in the "real world".

As mentioned earlier, both of us were going to create profiles on the most popular social media networks and practice the way those actually work. We were aiming at some interaction to see how companies interact with customers. Due to such experiment, we are also aiming to discover the way companies "feel like" being the "engine", which is posting new and relevant updates.

One of us has also used those social media for internal purposes and interacted also directly with Renshaw Travel. Therefore, we also have some other questions, which were meant to have an absolutely different purpose, but it came out to be very useful for the thesis as well. The idea of internal use of social media networks, on which one of the members of this thesis had his presence, was to promote articles, interviews and other postings on Tohology.com. It appeared to be also related to the topic of the thesis and very good and reliable data for one of the aspects, which we were going to cover.

One of the questions was asking about the most difficult thing in such work as luxury travel business. The answer from a luxury travel advisor, an employee at Renshaw Travel, was “time difference and 24/7 demand”. This is a very important aspect to consider as constant demand in luxury travel is crucial and exhausting at the same time for workers. Moreover, time difference plays its role in the company’s success. Thus, we can conclude that in this business being “online” and visible all day long is crucial and using social media is an essential element of the company’s operations and existence in general.

What comes to “testing” part, in which we are going to discuss and analyze some of social media networks, where we created our own profiles, it is necessary to mention that we chose just the most popular ones and, mainly, if there was Renshaw Travel’s presence. Therefore, based on the analysis from the previous chapter, we tried to focus on Facebook, Google+, Twitter, YouTube, Pinterest, LinkedIn, and Instagram. Though, we did not have a possibility to create our profiles on Instagram due to a simple lack of Android platform, we tried to study it and, with help of a friend of ours, were able to understand its main principle of operation, which is similar to the one on Pinterest, but with no re-pin function. It gives you some sense of ownership of your photos with a possibility to edit that online. It is quite a good tool in terms of graphics; however, it is not the reason to use this network. It can be used as an additional social media tool, which works fine, but it does not make sense to spend too much time on Instagram.

As for Russian website VKontakte (VK), or Estonian Skype, which became so popular and now considered as social media (as it has the same functions as any other social media) we did not include them into our “testing” part simply because Renshaw Travel does not utilize them at all, despite their popularity worldwide.

Social media marketing is revolved around one basic principle, the quality outdoes quantity. The content is relevant, but even an interesting business approach online can be squandered if the platform it is used in is not suited to fit its image. Renshaw Travel is a brand. It has a field it excels at. It has a personality, a distinct feature that draws in the customers. The right demographic is not necessarily present every existing social network, but it is not commendable resource wise to have presence in all them. Optimizing the results come from understanding the clientele preferences and distributing available assets to the most essential online communities.

With more than 900 million users, Facebook is still easily considered the largest social network out there. The business interaction carried out in this service has multiplied exponentially during the past few years, but as it is still considered mainly as a gateway to social interaction, the results on companies' activity there may vary greatly. One issue is the point of perspective. How well are people going to react to a serious business venture in an environment designed to work as a medium to convey interactions between friends and acquaintances? Naturally, it depends much on brand's image on how it will blend into a relatively relaxed environment. For the sake of mere marketing, the other option is a solely ad-based campaign in Facebook, in which options become major due to a large quantity of third-party management tools.

As both of the authors of this thesis practiced that network, it appeared to be a very good tool for a company to promote its service. It can be a free or quite a cheap way to do it. Utilized properly, this network can bring good competitive advantage. Both of us found it easy to use and quite entertaining. It is also important in terms of customer satisfaction, because a customer can be pleased by being a bit entertained while a simple search. This idea works out well on many networks, but fits best on Facebook.

With Twitter main problems may arise due to quantity, the abundance of it. With roughly around 58 million tweets per day (Statistic Brain) and a limited character number of 140 per tweet, the risk of a message being buried under all the other data is substantial, but the requirement for short posts presents another prerequisite, the need to get to the point and do it as often as possible. To make Twitter work for marketing in itself without depending on its separate business template is a challenge. Visual representation does not come ideally in Twitter so the trick is in getting people to click on the links directing them to company webpages. In

comparison to Facebook though, the ratio of messages' recipients is usually higher on Twitter, as one of its main features is to notify every follower of posted tweets, unlike in Facebook where posts are shuffled by an algorithm that selects who see the post and who do not, evaluating the frequency and activity of fans interacting with posts, as well as the overall time of its existence.

As for Twitter, both members came to conclusion that it consumes too much time to keep up with "life" there. You have to spend an enormous amount of hours to see some results. However, a good thing to be visible is to choose several different fields of "interest". Of course, it is not the best option for a company, willing to sell its service, but good for a start. As soon as you create your profile on Twitter, you can start following as many related to your field of activities pages as possible. After that you can re-tweet a couple of tweets, and a good thing to do is to have a conversation with other users, by posting comments via a "reply" button. Regular and interesting updates on your profile can, certainly, increase your chances to be seen and followed. Once you started your activity on Twitter, you will have to continue with your tweets almost non-stop. That is (in practice) the formula of success on Twitter.

Unlike most of the other social media, LinkedIn is built with the emphasis of business in kind. It thrives on providing the company background, mission, and overall image, including individual employee expertise to the mix. This transpires in a huge network dedicated to making new business alliances, as well as knowing possible rivals. The network is also transmittable in optimizing the search engine, allowing the expansion of visibility outside the established online community. The downside of the business heavy aspect is that it is what it is, mostly leaning towards B2B activities. And while the data that can be showcased for possible partners and customers can be made thorough, it does take time to fully implement and perfect. While LinkedIn does include a similar advertisement tool as practically any other social media and is relatively cost effective with a few payment options, it lacks a chance for more accurate demographic demarcations.

As a matter of fact, LinkedIn is a good way to find new partners, create your company's business card to show what you are. It is not difficult to operate there; though, it is time consuming. In our opinion, it is necessary to have a good visible representation of your company on LinkedIn, but with the most important updates on it. Thus, you can create a good image of a professional company in the business world.

Google+ can be used to a great effect in determining the right audience. The “Circles” are basically user-specified groups, which can be contacted with a very definite demographic in mind and interacted easily through a video conference with the “Hangouts” option. Beside the benefit of Google+ being tightly integrated into the use of YouTube, another Google owned network, the brand page can be directly indexed to Google SEO and help to increase the search rankings. One more tool working in tandem is Google Analytics that can offer insight on the activity within the Google+-site to alert on the popular status. The interface is suited for a visual representation, thanks to the optimization of possible video features and image content. One weak point in this network lies in its security protocol. The network denies the usage of administrators to look after website, meaning that the marketing performed through Google+ is entirely on user’s shoulders. It also does not undo the fact that Facebook still is overshadowing Google+ as social network, which resonates to its usage as a marketing outlet.

What comes to Google+ and YouTube, we found it easy to create our profiles there and start sharing some news. It is especially easier to share videos via YouTube. You can use YouTube as a separate tool and upload your own videos and create your own channel, or you can simply share them to Twitter, Google+, Facebook, and some others. We did not see much sense to use Google+, but it is a way to be visible, while every other company is on Google+. Facebook seems a better tool in this sense. However, YouTube can hardly be replaced by other networks. It is too popular to ignore it and too rapidly growing not to be active on this network. Therefore, we found out that YouTube works much better as a social media tool than Google+. Besides, there are plenty of examples how people became famous thanks to YouTube and amount of views of a video. Nowadays, its service Vevo is making a new competition and awards the singers (groups), whose videos reached a certain limit of views. This motivates many industries to gain visibility in a video format; thus, there is good potential for a luxury travel business as well.

As for Pinterest, it was quite funny and interesting to create our profiles there and start re-pinning and sharing own photos. This is also one of the best entertainment social media tools. It does, practically, work as a marketing tool if applied properly. First of all, when you upload a picture, you need to add some description; here you have a good opportunity to take a step. Secondly, after you added a picture, you can open it and press “edit” and add a link, which will lead directly to your company’s website, when clicking on this picture. This is a trick,

which is well-known by companies and utilized a lot. And you should not forget about interaction; post some comments and wait for the reply. Such efforts do bring results and help the company to gain a little more visibility in the online world.

One of us has also created a profile on MySpace, and, according to him, there is not much sense for Renshaw Travel to make its profile there, or there is no sense at all. The same applies for VK, where the same person has his profile. This website is not for luxury customers, it is mostly for the average person; though, it has some potential for extra visibility. However, due to a huge copyright issue, so widely discussed in Russia and nearest countries, the future of this website is uncertain (RT, 2012). “In 2011 the Recording Industry Association of America condemned VK’s practices, accusing it of facilitating copyright infringement” (Charyev, 2012). All this has spoiled VK’s reputation and does not seem attractive for a luxury travel company to have its presence on such network. Despite some Russian clientele, attracted to consume Renshaw Travel’s services, and one Russian luxury travel advisor, it is still considered as not the most appropriate source to advertise the company’s services.

What comes to some other social media networks, it does not seem attractive for Renshaw Travel to spend time on those; besides, they do not have that mass visibility and do not perceived as related to luxury at all. Certainly, it is better to focus on the most important and best ones, instead of being defocused and having bad appeal in the online world.

In addition, it is worth to mention that all social media networks, even being competitors, cooperate with each other. It is the only way to survive. We can see a simple example of so-called “sharing” function on most popular social media networks. For instance, you can share a YouTube video you like on other networks as Twitter, Google+, VK, Facebook, and so on. Most of them do not belong to Google, as well as they do not belong to any particular company. They have different owners and different countries of origin (COO).

Such mutual cooperation breaks any barriers and makes those networks viable, whereas other networks simply go into history without a chance to become widely used. Such cooperation is also applied by Renshaw Travel, as we could see earlier with Four Seasons Hotels and Resorts, Orient-Express Hotels and Resorts, Fairmont Hotels and Resorts, Virtuoso, and some others. It is the best way to survive and be profitable, to have mutual advertising (advertising yourself through your partner), and reliance on those, who you work with.

All the above mentioned social media networks are also available in various mobile devices; therefore, it provides easy access to two-way interaction. Nowadays, people are too dependent on technologies and, especially, mobile devices. You can hardly imagine a person without a cell-phone in his or her pocket. Wi-fi Internet is available almost everywhere for free. Such online “madness” led to a boom in social media networks. Companies realized that and started to be active both in the online and offline (real) worlds. This doubles a company’s visibility, naturally. As reward for being active online, companies have more customers willing to consume their services and purchase their products.

Definitely, constant 24/7 interaction is possible with a team of specialists only, because one person cannot be awake all day long. Thus, more and more people are involved and the online markets are expanding. Perhaps, it is a matter of laziness, or just a matter of time. For example, when you look for a good luxury travel for your family, you can walk around the city, searching for an agency, or you can simply go online and find it all on the Internet. Having such fast and easy access provides a company with its new customers. As for Renshaw Travel, the company understands it and is trying to capture every possible spot in the online world, concerning the most essential social media networks. The company’s interaction with customers is going to be discussed later on. It is one of the most essential components, which is worth to be reviewed and analyzed.

5.2 Commercial radius of Renshaw Travel

Online exposure, which Renshaw Travel employs, is highly dependent on the initial contact that is made through the home website. This essentially carries the whole marketing appeal as the website is linked straight to the most mainstreamed social media outlets, carrying Renshaw’s identity as wide as possible. Every connection can serve as an extension in a grander marketing strategy and illuminate potential for further reciprocal interactions with partners.

Renshaw Travel’s marketing appeal as a legitimately qualified luxury travel agency is enhanced by its membership with Virtuoso, a luxury travel network operating in 20 countries. Being one of the highest rated luxury tourism-networks in the world, Virtuoso’s brand is already a customer filter in itself, as the companies, which are invited to join this collective, represent the top 1 percent of the world’s travel agencies, drawing in customers that are look-

ing for tourism opportunities within Renshaw Travel's sphere of influence, but with minimized competition.

Orient-Express is a chain of hotels and resorts, but has also made name for its offerings in the field of transportation experiences, mainly trains. What sets Renshaw Travel apart with Orient-Express is its Bellini Club membership and with it a closer sharing of company's internal structure, making it easier to identify the possibilities of upgrading services and how to market them. This practically gives Renshaw Travel a chance to indirectly promote itself while promoting Orient-Express.

The same benefit principle employed in earlier examples follows also to the collaboration with Dorchester Collection. Much of the strategy in differentiating Renshaw from the others is extensively regulated by the idea of offering value-added services. In this case its inclusion as a member of Dorchester's Diamond Club, which enables Renshaw to add amenities to reservations, is exclusively limited to their repertory.

Probably, the most well-known associate Renshaw Travel has gained on its side is a compatriot organization Four Seasons Hotels and Resorts. Whereas in aforementioned collaborators the main idea behind Renshaw Travel's advertising lied almost entirely in the information that is more or less based only on Renshaw Travel's website and essentially left out on any collaborative company's home page, with Four Seasons, the marketing is more bilateral. Four Seasons' website displays Renshaw Travel's name alongside its "Preferred Partner" program and even makes the recommendation to book accommodation through Renshaw Travel to receive added value benefits.

"Preferred Partner" program is an invitation based community of collaborating travel agencies with a very limited number of admitted members; therefore, as the Four Seasons chain is putting efforts on launching a new marketing program, in order to maintain a strong customer loyalty (Glab, 2013), there lies potential for Renshaw Travel to gather more following alongside Four Seasons.

What Twitter, Facebook and, commonly, most of the major social networks incorporate into their systems is usually the idea of simply marking a comment, picture, article or any other link another user has uploaded as "like this". In a sense, this forms a backbone for a "social

ranking”. Brand building in social media depends much on how many people pay attention to releases, but the message will not serve to its full potential if the people, receiving it initially, are not relevant in the terms of right customer demographic.

5.2.1 Followers and their relevance to the company’s success

Being based in Vancouver, the primary marketing area for Renshaw Travel, the company tends to center within the borders of Canada, but it is still offering extensive services to people located in more distant locations. Besides, according to the respondents’ replies, the company is not limited by the local customers only; it has clientele from different countries. The fact of how many people this may attract on foreign markets is not exactly easy to estimate due to social media accounts that have been set to restricted information. Though, when it comes to the number of followers and the presses of “like” icon, it rarely tells the exact truth.

Any online advertiser would find it ideal to discover his or her own marketing plan of going through a snowball effect online and see how a campaign of own conception gets spread. In social media this is usually transmitted to figures relating to how many people have paid attention to advertisements and have marked themselves as followers of a company in question. It can be assumed that this is aimed by several of the original followers consisting largely on the employees of the company, in order to cover more ground at a faster rate. Still, in the best case scenario there would be the thought of an online user sending turning two more people into followers, those two each turning two more and so on. That is rarely the case.

As Renshaw Travel has secured a few impressively large entrepreneurs as partners this could in itself indicate a remarkable rise of people checking in to view the updates Renshaw Travel’s releases into social media. In plain numbers, Renshaw Travel and all of its primary co-operators are present in the main social media outlets with the following of (as of November 5th 2013):

	Twitter (followers)	LinkedIn (followers)	Facebook (likes)	Google+ (followers)	Pinterest (followers)
Renshaw Travel	971	54	173	202	127
Four Seasons Hotels and Resorts	92 203	111 423	203 473	8 529	7 831
Virtuoso	9 994	4 789	12 177	-	-
Orient-Express Hotels and Resorts	8 222	5 613	23 405	621	117
Dorchester Collection	14 110	5 165	4 647	3 304	156
Aman Resorts	-	5 722	12 829	-	-
Fairmont Hotels and Resorts	67 752	65 578	103 188	1 545	1 236
Luxury Horizons	1 486	252	29	32	8
Inspired Retreats	-	-	-	-	-
North South Travel	422	15	-	20	12
Concorde Travel	21	10	2	-	0

TABLE 2. Social media in numbers (by Renshaw Travel and its partners)

Even though this data itself might represent multiple crossings of supplementing marketing channels, the fact is that numerous times the message that marketers hope to catch wind is buried under the megabytes of other information. This has been demonstrated along the way as a research carried out in 2012 by Pitney Bowes Software (eMarketer, 2012).

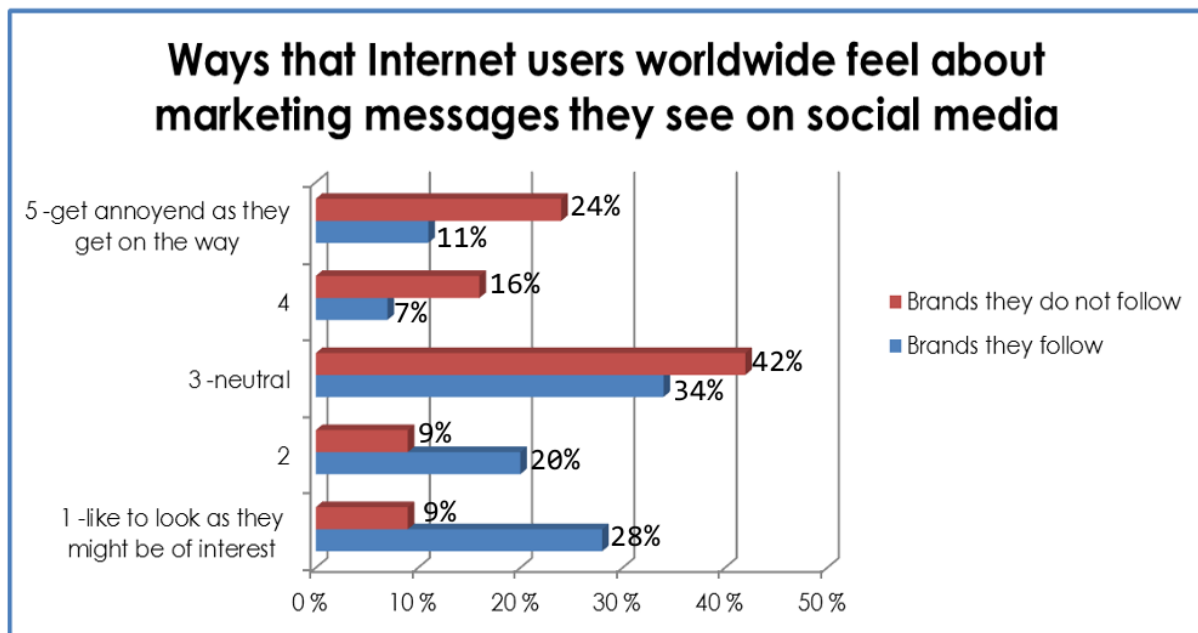


FIGURE 9. Ways that Internet users worldwide feel about marketing messages they see on social media (eMarketer, 2012).

After users had identified themselves of liking or following a company or a group, they were left feeling irrelevance about any other update that was posted later on by the same parties. This predisposition of advertisement material culminates in 11 percent of the users finding the material a group they themselves follow to be of an annoyance. In response, 28 percent of the respondents noted that they check whatever a company of their liking has uploaded as it might be of interest. That is still only 1 out of every 4 people, leaving the ratio of durable, lasting customer loyalty through social media very uncertain. When the brand was not even familiar to the respondents, the percentage dwindled more, leaving only 9 percent to show interest and while more people displayed neutral approach on the subject, also more people found the advertisements to cause more exasperation.

For Renshaw Travel the situation is more complicated as in relation number of posts that partners upload and the number of posts that are directly in favor of Renshaw Travel's interest may vary from miniscule to commercially relevant. The results, noticeable if there are, turn up often to be difficult to interpret as if, whether or not, the advertisement in social media has expanded the radius of pre-sale awareness, not to mention, if there is any way this might have had any effect on direct sales.

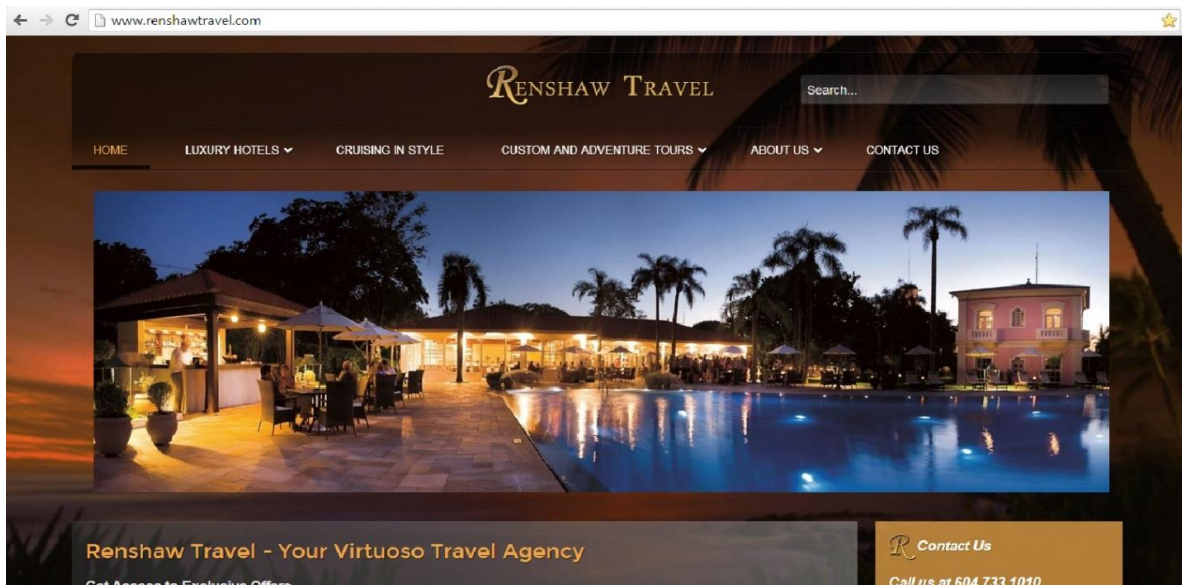
5.2.2 Inbound and outbound-based marketing strategies in use (two-way advertising)

Renshaw Travel's operation online portfolio can be stripped to two separate elements. In digital form it encompasses the main ideals of social media and e-commerce. A major force working in these sectors is Relevance Web Marketing, namely apparent in bidirectional advertising that Renshaw practices with its partners. Renshaw publishes press releases to get people invested in its collaborators and by using links to contact with these partners, the referral online traffic rises and along with it the positioning with search engines. The SEO and positioning as high as possible in search results is crucial.

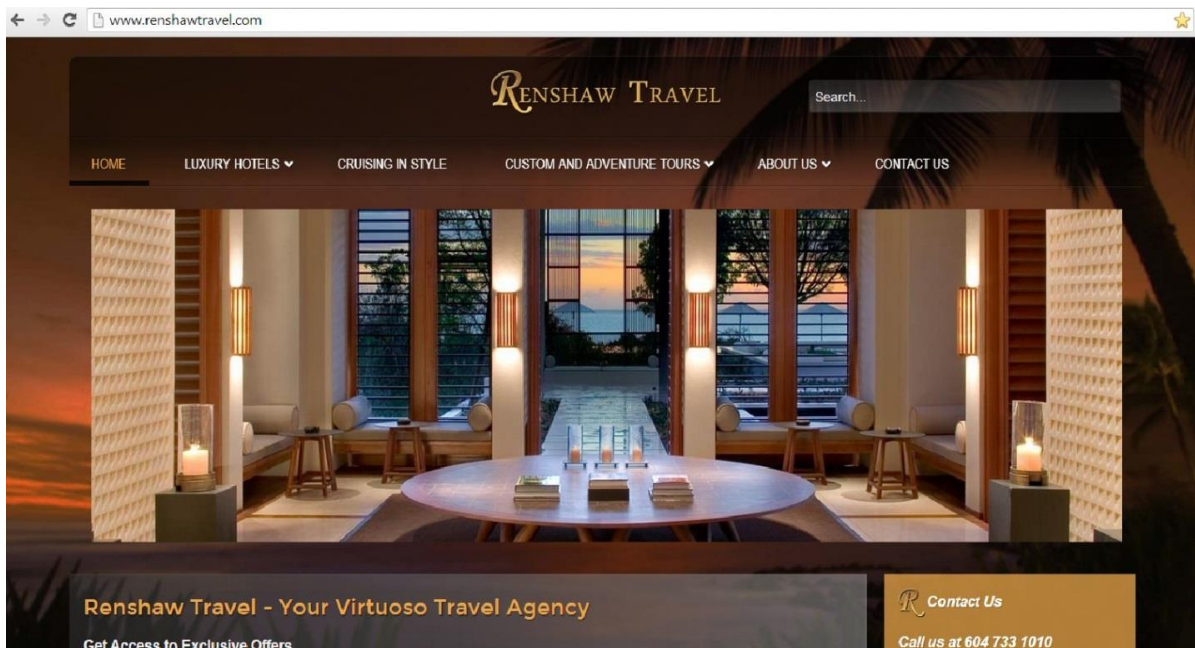
When looking at how the marketing is in the end carried out, it is mostly a mix of inbound and outbound elements. The Inbound aspect is mainly dictated by a specifically defined market and the relatively subtle approach on how to get new clientele, because when you look at it, the main difference between inbound and outbound marketing comes from how the marketing material is deployed. Outbound marketing is loud and indiscreet while inbound marketing attracts with a content that allures people, doesn't ram the message into their faces. Renshaw travel uses its contents' visual stimuli to enamor people, but more outbound-grounded elements of direct marketing, advertising and branding are just as much relevant. That is incidentally what social media has become. PPC (pay per click) - and PPM (pay per mille) -ads were evidently more popular just couple of years ago even in social media, but, eventually, that has gone through a change. Social networks can be utilized in a manner, which does not differentiate itself drastically from how a common user might act with their newsfeeds. It serves as a contrast to more garish online advertisements and makes the profession of doing business and marketing online social.

5.3 Renshaw Travel website's analysis

Definitely, there is a strong need to look at the company's website and make analysis on it. It is not going to be deep enough from the IT point of view, but mostly from the business one, due to our specialization. We aim at analyzing the website's visibility for customers, its ease of use and navigation, its relevance in terms of information, provided on the front (home) page. In most cases it is not an easy task to do, because people have different opinions and we should stay quite neutral while this process.



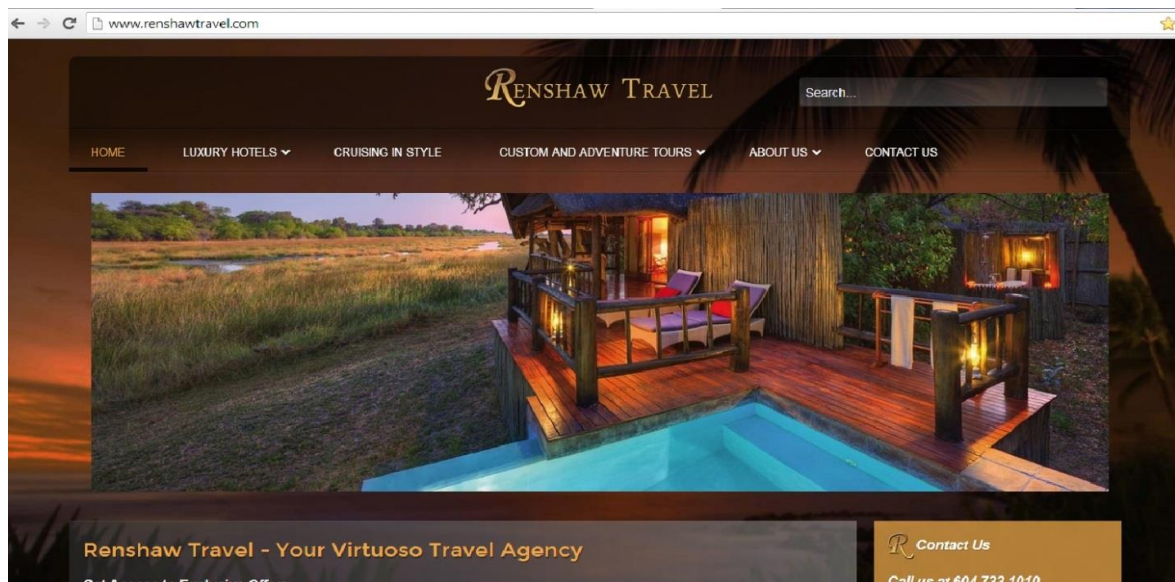
PICTURE 19. Home page of <http://www.renshawtravel.com/>



PICTURE 20. Home page of <http://www.renshawtravel.com/>



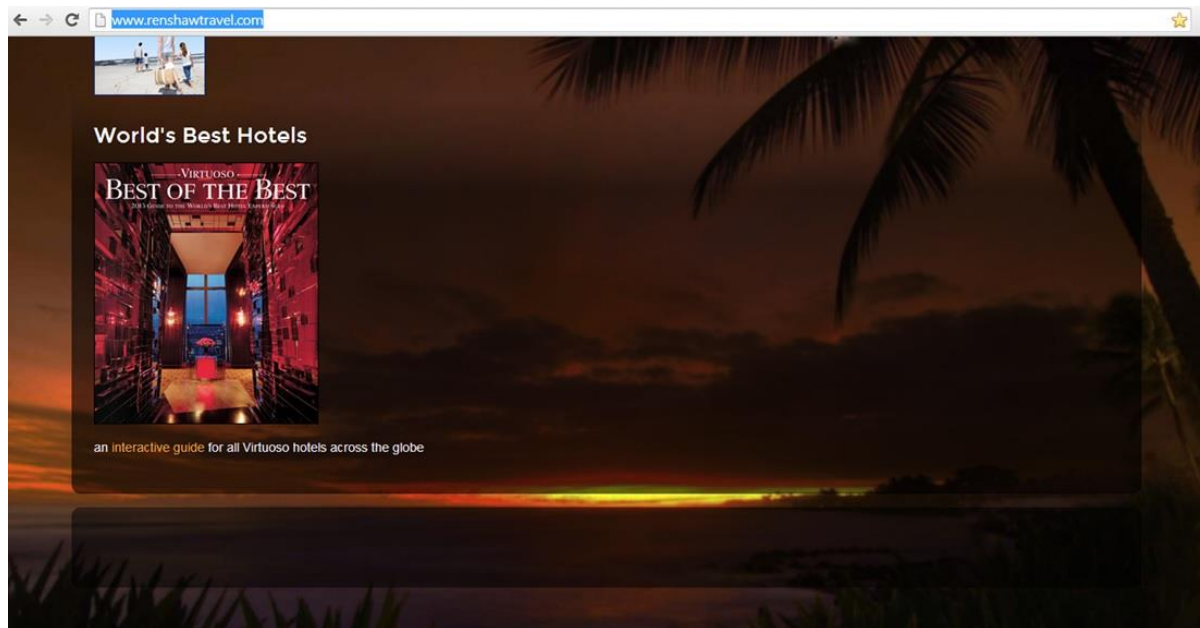
PICTURE 21. Home page of <http://www.renshawtravel.com/>



PICTURE 22. Home page of <http://www.renshawtravel.com/>

In order to analyze some specifics of the website, we asked a friend of ours, who is an IT specialist to share his opinion on the structure of the website and particularly the home page, which is the front page of the website. In his point of view, the front page seems to be too overloaded with extra information, and placement of whatever comes below the picture did not seem quite appropriate for it. Besides, we also heard an opinion on the background, where it seemed to be a little depressing rather than inviting. It is hard to judge tastes, but, obviously, there is a need to refresh the background from time to time.

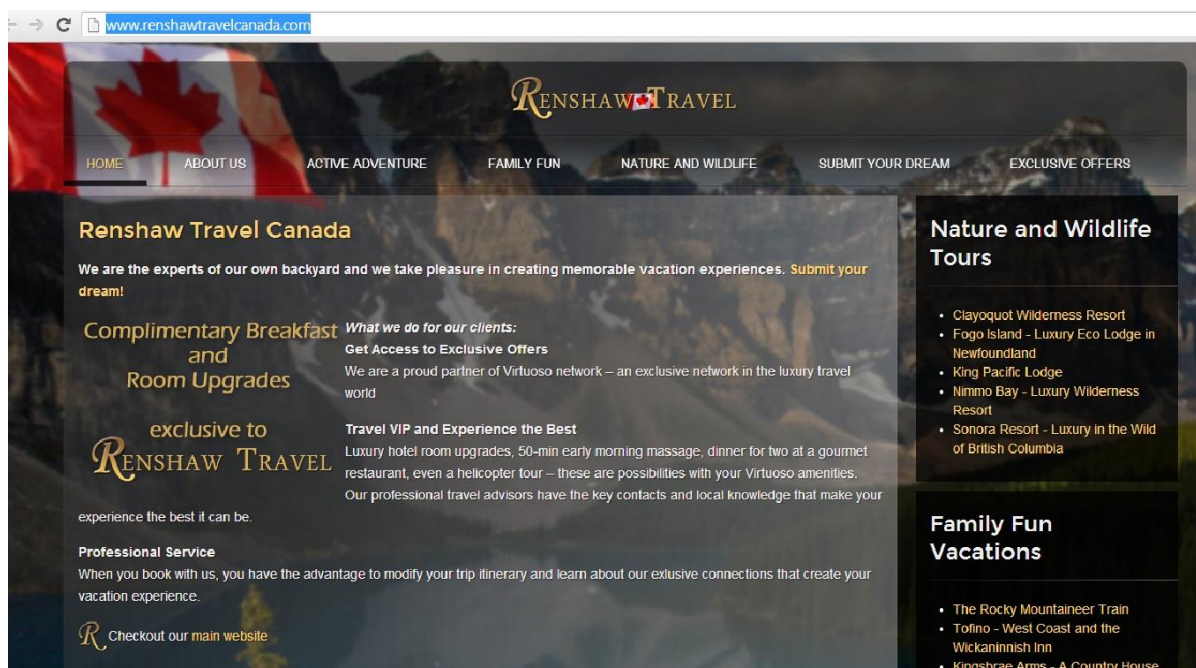
Another interesting comment was given concerning the footer of the front page, which is totally empty and thus seems to be useless at all. To prove this opinion we made a print screen of it.



PICTURE 23. Home page of <http://www.renshawtravel.com/>

Based on some comments provided, we can assume that the website is aimed at a certain audience, which is more mature and not ready for too many changes or too fancy look of it. Though, some changes need to be made.

There is another link in the bottom of the page, which leads to a new website of Renshaw Travel specifically focused on Canada. The website's address is <http://www.renshawtravelcanada.com/>. It definitely has a professional look and the same style as the original website. However, it has the same issue, concerning the footer; although, it is quite attractive and welcoming. The print screen provided below reflects it.



PICTURE 24. Home page of <http://www.renshawtravelcanada.com/>

On the front page of the main website of the company we can see buttons to different social media. The most popular ones, where Renshaw Travel has its presence, are on the front, however, the rest are hidden in the additional button menu. Among the additional social media there are way too many sources provided, though, some of them are not social media. We also checked the company's presence on different social media networks and discovered that it does not have too many of them. Thus, it is not quite clear and relatively confusing, why Renshaw Travel has those sources as additional social media tools.

All in all, we find the official website of Renshaw Travel quite attractive and professionally made; however, there is a room for development. It is not bad, because development means movement forward, which is required in the contemporary world. Perhaps, fixing such minor issues can help the company to come up with new innovative ideas that might provide it with even more competitive advantage.

5.4 Importance of the Internet in everyday operations for Renshaw Travel

Obviously, in order to comprehend the importance of the Internet in Renshaw Travel's everyday operations, we need to take a closer look at its interaction with customers via its presence on various social media networks.

What social media gives for the advertising industry is a form of a “living” marketing, a possibility of altering the message along the way and using social media for demand generation. To succeed in advertising campaign that is being carried out in any social platform, the separation between outbound and inbound marketing, a promotion and a commercial engagement has to be made. There are a number of social media networks out there, but, in accordance to this thesis, we will narrow the analysis down to the commercial point of view to the most poignant ones, with the main intent of figuring out how they are applicable to Renshaw Travel in marketing means.

We are going to research and analyze directly Renshaw Travel, its partners and those four competitors, mentioned earlier. As for partners, we target the major ones only, which were described in the previous part of the thesis. It is quite clear that the company has many partners, which are not that big in size or not that well-known yet; therefore, we concentrate on the ones, we have reviewed before.

What comes to competitors, it is also necessary to know and understand the way they operate and use the Internet and social media, in particular, to promote their services. There are many different social media tools to do that, and the company, which is able to utilize them the best way, becomes the “winner” in this competition. It is also good to see how your rivals work to learn something from them or to avoid some mistakes; thus, it is worth spending time on (Kotler, Keller 2006, 103). All in all, we are expecting to get some good results, which should help us to find out some specifics of how and how well companies use the Internet in their everyday operations.

5.4.1 Renshaw Travel’s interaction with customers

Definitely, to have a full analysis of Renshaw Travel’s operations, we also need to take a look at the company’s interaction with customers. Thus, we are going to concentrate solely on those social media networks, where the company has its presence, obviously.

We are going to start from the most unusual in this sense network, which is Pinterest. There is not much interaction possible due to this network’s specifics. You can share pictures and re-pin them from various profiles, but it is not a blog, where you can write and have discussions. Of course, you are able to give a description of your picture, or you can write a comment un-

der your or somebody else's picture, but users have to open this particular picture to see those comments. Therefore, it is not the best source for interaction, but a perfect source for visibility.

Renshaw Travel uploads quite a lot of its own pictures, as well as it re-pins pictures from the profiles it is following. A good thing here is that by re-pinning other people's pictures, Renshaw Travel is able to have some rare and beautiful ones in its collection. On the other hand, it is not really clear which pictures do belong to Renshaw Travel, which ones do not. Such a mix of pictures can make people confused, if they are interested in the company's pictures, in the company's exact service.

Clearly, Renshaw Travel can re-pin pictures from its partners and, thus, advertise itself with such pictures and its partners. By re-pinning the partners' pictures, Renshaw Travel kind of "borrows" them for a better visible presentation of the service and partners.

For a small experiment we chose some of the company's albums and some of those photos randomly to check if there were any comments and interaction, in particular. What we have discovered is surprising. First of all, we did not see any interaction at all. We could only see one comment on each picture, uploaded by Renshaw Travel, which was more like description with no other comments under that. Secondly, there are not too many re-pins from the company's pictures. They were some re-pins, which give certain visibility through other people's profiles. This is the best point in here.

All in all, Pinterest is a good tool for Renshaw Travel; though, it is not utilized properly enough. The company has really nice pictures and could have made more emphasis on this network; however, we do not see much of activity by Renshaw Travel.

What comes to YouTube, Renshaw Travel is less active on this network, but it is certainly more successful for the company in terms of visibility. First of all, there are some comments for some videos, which is a good indicator. Secondly, a number of "likes" proves that people watch, like and get familiar with the company and its partners. Thirdly, a number of views show that those videos have been watched. In this sense YouTube is a better tool for Renshaw Travel if videos are successful and watched by the audience. However, if there are a small number of views (not even "likes", but simply views), it may be considered as a shame for the

company. This might indicate a failed attempt to promote itself online. It, definitely, lacks some proper actions to promote videos, pictures, and so on.

As for interaction specifically, we saw some comments made by viewers with some comments from Renshaw Travel as well. However, comments from Renshaw Travel are describing or simply indicating its attitude towards a video. As a matter of fact, there is no further interaction between users, i.e. the company and viewers.

Speaking about YouTube, we should also speak about Google+, as both are part of Google now. Renshaw Travel has its profile on Google+ and this network is a different story for the company. It is quite surprising how “unstable” the situation is. Most of the recent posts made by Renshaw Travel have no “likes” or re-posts; however, certain pictures have some kind of explosion in terms of “likes” and re-posts. A huge number of people, who liked and re-posted a certain picture, prove that the company is followed by many people and that it is visible, whereas most of the recent posts prove the opposite. It is difficult to judge and say exactly, what the situation really is, but, certainly, it is not totally bad or good, it mostly depend on some factors, some circumstances.

During our close look at the company’s profile on Google+, we discovered that there were some comments made followers, but with no replies from Renshaw Travel. It is a good sign for the company in terms of visibility, but quite a bad sign in terms of ignorance to responding to the comments. Generally, the company is quite active on this network, but it lacks some “smart moves” to promote itself in the online world.

Obviously, the official website of Renshaw Travel is the core online presence for the company. People get familiar with and choose between the offered services, find the right specialist in Renshaw Travel, and purchase (and, afterwards, consume) the service.

All contact information is presented directly on the website, which makes it easier for a customer. The website is the center, or the hub, for Renshaw Travel’s activities, supported by various social media networks. The major interaction taking place via the official website is the physical presence in the company’s office or a direct phone call or e-mail to one of the company’s specialists. This interaction is the best and most important for Renshaw Travel, because it leads directly to selling a service.

The image of Twitter today is based around its distinctive center feature of microblogging, setting a limitation of 140 characters in page posts, which further emphasizes the idea of quality before quantity. Twitter has put a lot more emphasis on its capabilities as a credible service for advertisements, as it has opened up a uniform sideline service (<https://business.twitter.com/>), which is specifically meant to allow even small companies to receive ad space from Twitter. How this translates to practice is the cost of advertising is defined by the number of “likes”, re-tweets and the number of times the ad has been shared among the users, with prices going as low as 10 cents per interaction with an ad. To ensure that the business is a legitimate one, there is an option of verifying the account, so that no one else may use its name as a screen name within the service. Another outbound-based marketing element, yet much more resembling inbound in practice that has been incorporated into Twitter, is the TwtQpon, an online coupon offering small discounts or benefits for products, but with the unlocking requirement to tweet it on the personal Twitter wall or registering as a follower.

Just the core microblogging feature can be used for marketing, with one element of being a targeted tweet. This translates in being able to choose categories, main and sub to make it more pinpointed of with whom to share the tweet, even down to the geographical location and the device in use. A marketer may also take advantage of tweets sent by other people entirely. A promoted tweet can influence people through the usage of a separate individual. A company practically buys ad space from tweets that relate to their products and have a base of followers that fit into the target demographic.

Twitter has evolved into an extensively customizable platform, thanks to multiple add-ons that can personalize Twitter to fit individual needs. Out of all these extra applications the one named SocialBro is specifically constructed to manage delicately limited marketing. A slightly controversial management tool, SocialBro can analyze facts, such as when the user is logged on, how they spend time on Twitter, in what groups does the user and his/her followers belong to and many other features. The filter in SocialBro is very encompassing, allowing a search for Twitter users based on interest, language, location, profile and even up to whether or not the user brandishes an online avatar.

Therefore, it is quite obvious that Twitter is becoming more and more popular worldwide. Renshaw Travel is not an exception to have its profile on Twitter. The company is pretty active on this network and has constant updates. According to the respondents' replies, Twitter is not considered as the main tool for the company, but it is granted properly in terms of attention paid to this network. Moreover, during one of the members of this thesis internship at Renshaw Travel, Twitter was reviewed as the most promising and the most rapid network, according to the CEO of the company, Don Renshaw. The focus has shifted now due to certain reasons, and equal attention is paid to the most essential for the company social media networks.

Looking at the company's profile on Twitter, the one can expect more activity. Renshaw Travel does not re-tweet, replies to or favorites other people's and companies' tweets. This lack of initiative of direct interaction has led to no replies, re-tweets, or "favorite" notes by other users. Such empty activity seems to be a waste of time.

We compared different random pages and discovered that most of activity could be found on those profiles, where users had most interaction with each other, i.e. replies to, re-tweeting or pressing "favorite" somebody's posts.

On the other hand, we found some re-tweets from their partners' or family members' pages. This is a good, but rather poor indication of activity. Twitter means interaction with other users. If you simply post your tweets with no direct interaction, nobody is going to view or even have a chance to see them. The idea of Twitter is cooperation via interaction. Therefore, it is crucial to remember that, when and if using Twitter as one of the tools of social media.

What comes to a professional business network, LinkedIn, it is a business card of Renshaw Travel. The company is trying to post regular updates and has some like for almost each post. This network does not comprise the meaning of the same massive interaction as on some other social media; however, it is a good source of business interaction. The company is able to send messages to its partners or those, who are in a "friend list", as well as it is able to reply to messages.

As for interaction on LinkedIn, we have not found many of comments, just a few of them. Though, for those that we found, there were no replies back, for example, as simple "Thank

you”. It feels like a total ignorance of what is going on after the post has been published. This is something that is present throughout all of social media networks, where Renshaw Travel has its presence.

Last but not least, here comes Facebook. In the terms of registered users, Facebook is still regarded of being at the top of the social media competition. This has not transferred to marketing with as comparable numbers however, for while Facebook runs an almost exact promoted post-option in comparison to its rival, Twitter, the ads that become affiliated with promoted posts are generally viewed by less than 16 percent of the fans (Constantine, 2012).

To enhance Facebook’s popularity for marketers, one of the more recent additions to its features was the inclusion of Shutterstock picture library access for the business Facebook users. This opened up a stockpile of approximately 25 million images that can be freely used in tandem with Facebook ad creator-tool.

Facebook has already ended its Reach Generator Program, which was plagued by an inconsistent ROI-ratio in comparison to Facebook’s cost-free applications, so nowadays what the network is highlighting as their main gateway in advertising is essentially their version of promoted posts, a way of pitching a standard newsfeed on the Facebook wall of all the contacts. The Internet is effective for the following tasks and ROI (Return on Investment) models:

- ➔ Brand building
- ➔ Lead generation
- ➔ Online sales (e-commerce)
- ➔ Customer support
- ➔ Market research
- ➔ Word of mouth, word of web, buzz marketing
- ➔ Content services
- ➔ Web publishing

“Your enterprise may require one of these ROI models, or several. ...you need to be clear as to your objectives and the expected return for your investment online” (Harden, Heyman 2009, 7). It is really crucial to know your objectives, when advertising via social media. The online world takes too much time; therefore, it is supposed to be spent properly. The way you organize your online content and your company’s “face” is the way you are perceived as a

company; besides, “done properly, the increase can nearly double offline purchasing” Harden, Heyman 2009, 8).

Currently Renshaw Travel has received 52 “likes” on Facebook, but the option of promoting posts depends on the profile possessing 400 of them. This situation is mendable and Renshaw Travel ought to reflect on the options on widening their scope on the largest social network to access its full potential. Facebook has a similar electronic coupon system to Twitter, but in which the user receives the benefit after clicking the “like” button. Offering simple benefits may prove out to be the nudge in gaining more elements to Facebook marketing plan, but naturally serves as a great way to allure new consumers to use Renshaw’s services and gaining online visibility.

When the option of promoting posts becomes viable, the next issue comes from how such a feature is utilized effectively. The problem here is that the program itself is rather generic. The conditions of choosing a demographic are not great in quantity, having the categories of reachable people mostly mandated by the set budget.

There is an option to promoted posts, one that does not need as many requirements and when used correctly, can be used to a greater effect. As of November 7, 2013 working exclusively on Chrome-browser, the Facebook Power Editor is a downloadable self-serve advertisement tool that can be utilized to enhance the effect of Facebook ads by defining the demographic with a very specific detail. The targeting system is comprised of more than 500 subcategories from household sizes to dog owners. As such criteria tends to depend much on the trust of the user keeping their information constantly updated, the Power Editor is able to track down potential customers by their online purchase history and the nature of surveys they have filled out. This may prove to be a valid option for Renshaw as Power Editor can process multiple campaigns at once and saving them for later editing and usage, all with adjustable budget determined by the marketers themselves.

As mentioned earlier, Facebook still remains one of the most popular social networks in the world. What comes to Renshaw Travel, it does not miss its chance to be visible on the most popular network. However, we do not find many “likes” under posted pictures and notes, nor can we see many comments from the followers. It is a pity, because Renshaw Travel is always posting a lot of good stuff on its profiles (on various networks).

Specifically for Facebook there are no negative remarks due to a very low level of interaction; therefore, it is difficult to analyze how the company replies to comments. As discussed earlier, due to a relatively small number of followers on some networks, the opportunity for more visibility is not exploited.

As for simple e-mail and phone calls, we do not have an opportunity to check it through a consumer's eyes. We could have possibly created a fake e-mail and sent a message with a request for a service, or made a phone call, but it would not seem nice at all. The objection of the thesis is to be fair, honest about the actions, and neutral when analyzing the company's activities. But what we did mention was time to reply to our request, concerning the interview for our thesis. It took us two tries and almost a month to get the first reply back; though, we still have not received all four replies, we just received three of them. This, somehow, indicates the company's willingness to interact with potential customers. However, we do hope that the situation is going to change in the nearest future.

Summing up, it is logical to point out that all the above mentioned social media networks can work for Renshaw Travel and work good, if promoted properly. Uploading pictures, posts, and notes is solely not enough for a proper marketing. People should see some activity, some "care" about their interests and attention. Such networks are a good source of visibility for the company, but they should be utilized in a certain way, so that the constant updates and "fresh" look are mentioned by the audience.

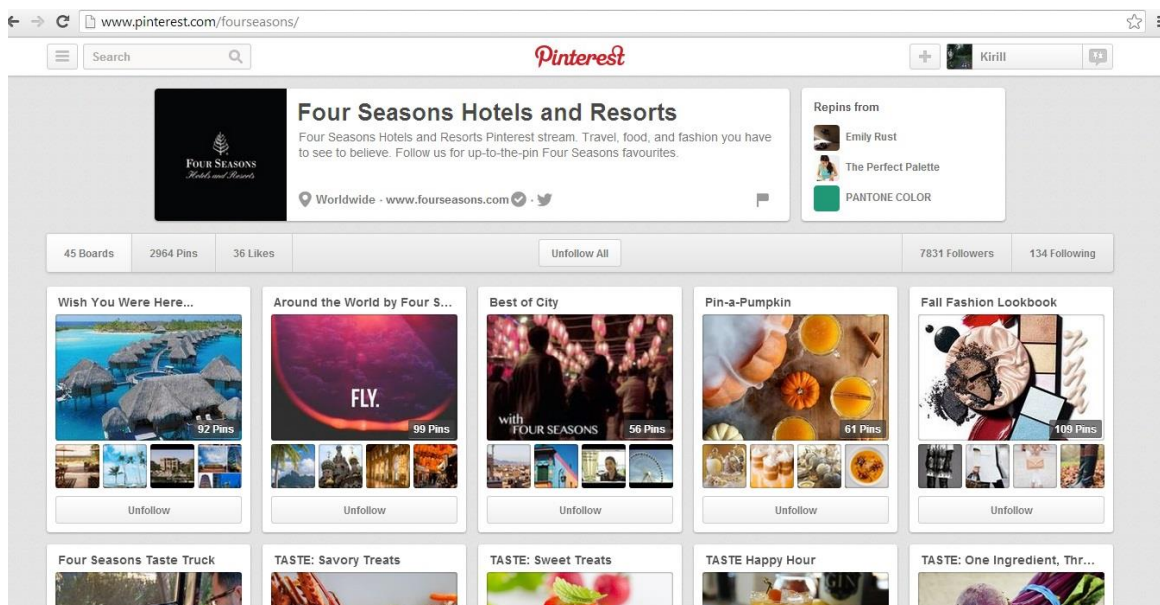
5.4.2 The partners' interaction with customers and online visibility

In this part of our research, we are going to review and find out, which of the partners of Renshaw Travel are the most successful in the online world and on which social media. We decided to start from Four Seasons Hotels and Resorts.



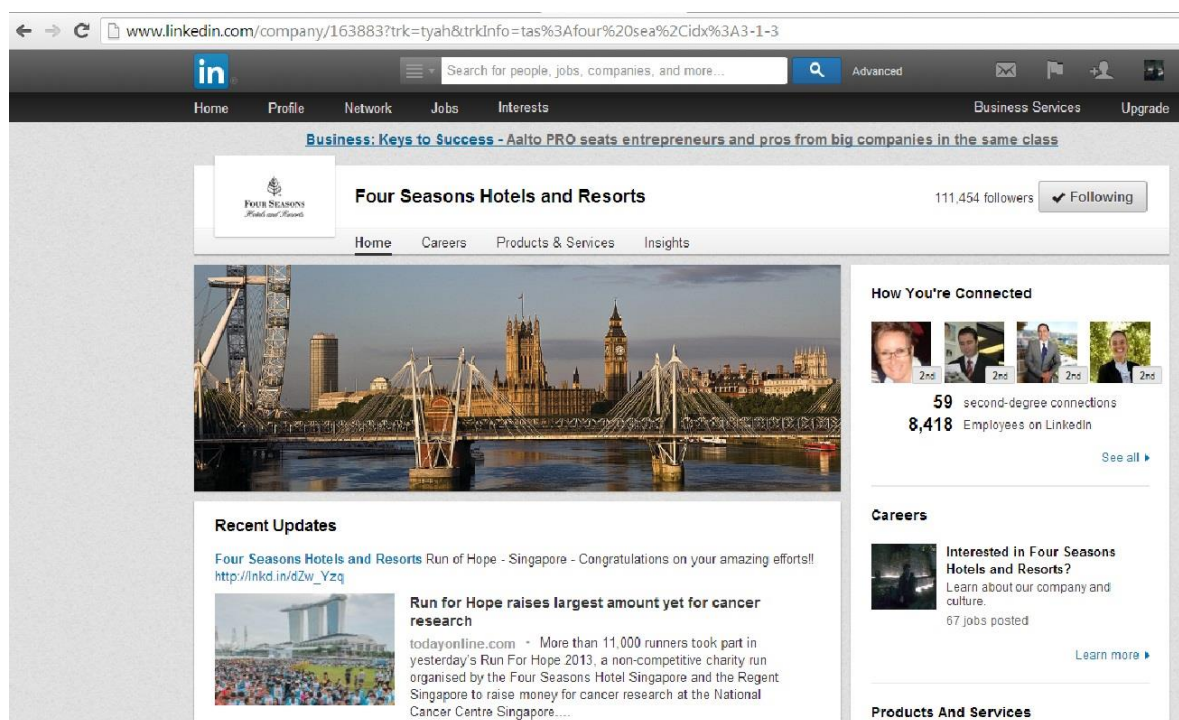
PICTURE 25. Four Seasons Hotels and Resorts' profile on Twitter

The first network to review is Twitter. Here we can see lots of updates, re-tweets, and viable conversation. It is quite visible that followers communicate with the company and the company does reply. Moreover, we can clearly see the time of replies, which tells us that Four Seasons Hotels and Resorts do try to reply as soon as possible. Sometimes it takes a couple of days, but sometimes it takes a couple of hours or even less.



PICTURE 26. Four Seasons Hotels and Resorts' profile on Pinterest

Definitely, it is a good sign of a hard work. But that was just one network. What comes to Pinterest, here we also try to pick some of the company's albums randomly and check some of the pictures. Thus, it is clearly seen that there is not interaction, because people, who upload those pictures, mostly put some comments by themselves, describing the picture. However, there are quite a lot of "likes" and re-pins. It indicates interest towards Four Season Hotels and Resorts.



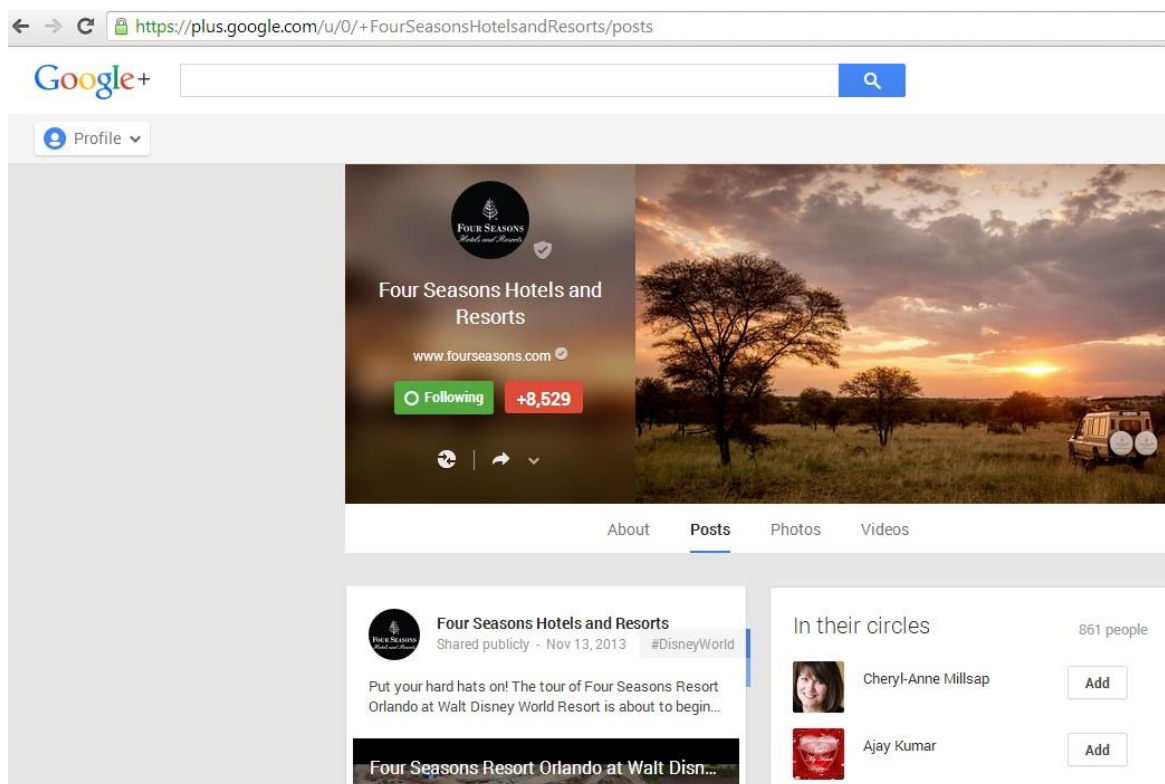
PICTURE 27. Four Seasons Hotels and Resorts' profile on LinkedIn

Moving on to LinkedIn, it is easy to mention interest to the Four Seasons' chain posts. Large amount of "likes" proves the company's visibility. Though, it is not active in terms of replies. It could be a little more responsive to the comments. Generally, the appeal of the company is great.

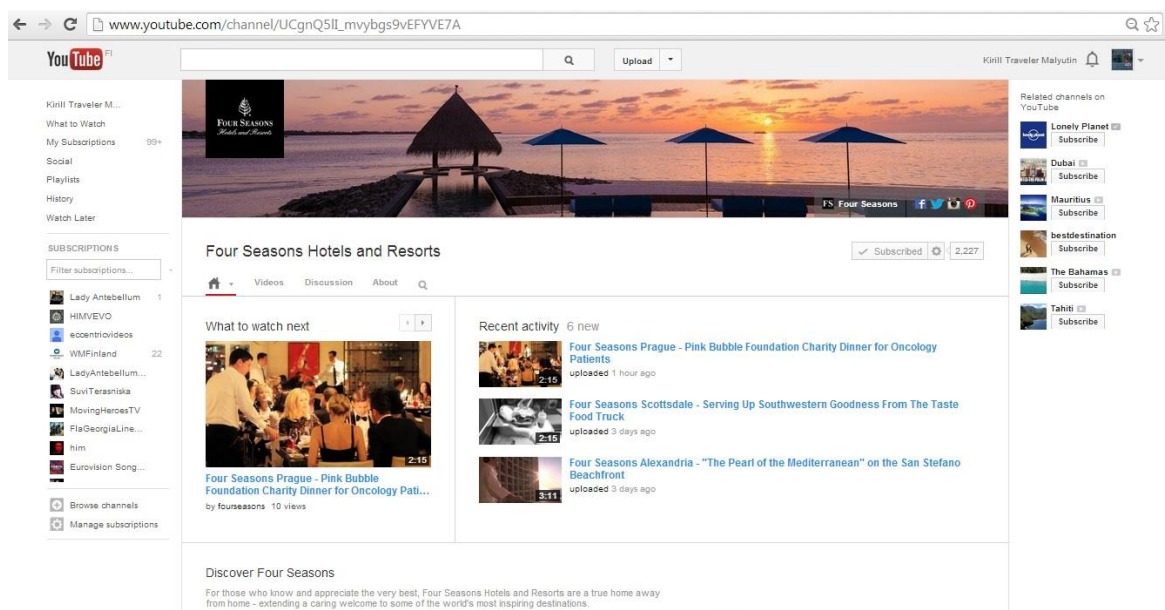


PICTURE 28. Four Seasons Hotels and Resorts' profile on Facebook

As for Facebook, here we can see fantastic activity. A huge number of “likes” under posts, lots of comments and, most importantly, replies, prove the company’s interaction with customers and simply followers, who are potential customers. It is unbelievable in terms of such communication with Facebook users. The Four Seasons chain also manages to advertise itself and its new destinations and services through replies. For instance, one of the replies contains a reminder of the hotel, presented on a picture, and the place itself, i.e. “Four Seasons Hotels and Resorts We look forward to welcoming you to Four Seasons Resort Costa Rica at Peninsula Papagayo, Kathy Klodas!”.



PICTURE 29. Four Seasons Hotels and Resorts' profile on Google+

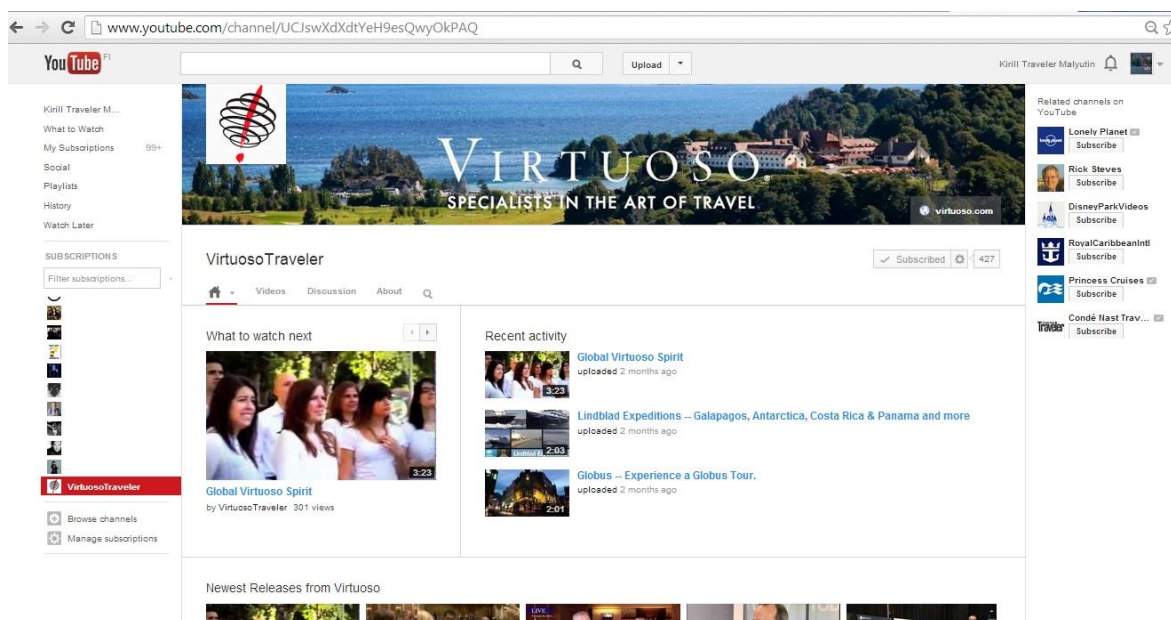


PICTURE 30. Four Seasons Hotels and Resorts' profile on YouTube

The following network is Google+, which is part of Google, as well as YouTube. On Google+ it is easy to see that there are less “likes” and comments under pictures. Moreover, we have not found any replies from Four Seasons Hotels and Resorts. Perhaps, Google+ is less attractive for Four Seasons. The same stands for YouTube videos of the company. Some of the videos are popular and have more views, some have less. Some videos have comments and re-

plies from Four Seasons Hotels and Resorts; however, there are too many videos, where there is a low level of activity. The reason for that is not clear enough. We can only assume and predicts, but this is the situation at the moment.

As for Virtuoso, we were able to find it on some of networks. For example, on YouTube it is called “Virtuoso Traveler”. The situation is quite similar to Four Seasons Hotels and Resorts’ presence on YouTube. Not too many views and “likes”, as well as comments. The reason here might be simply because Virtuoso is mostly focused on its partners, instead of direct customers. Of course, it is more a private issue to discover, whether it is true or not. Therefore, due to the company’s private issues we try to stay as neutral as possible.

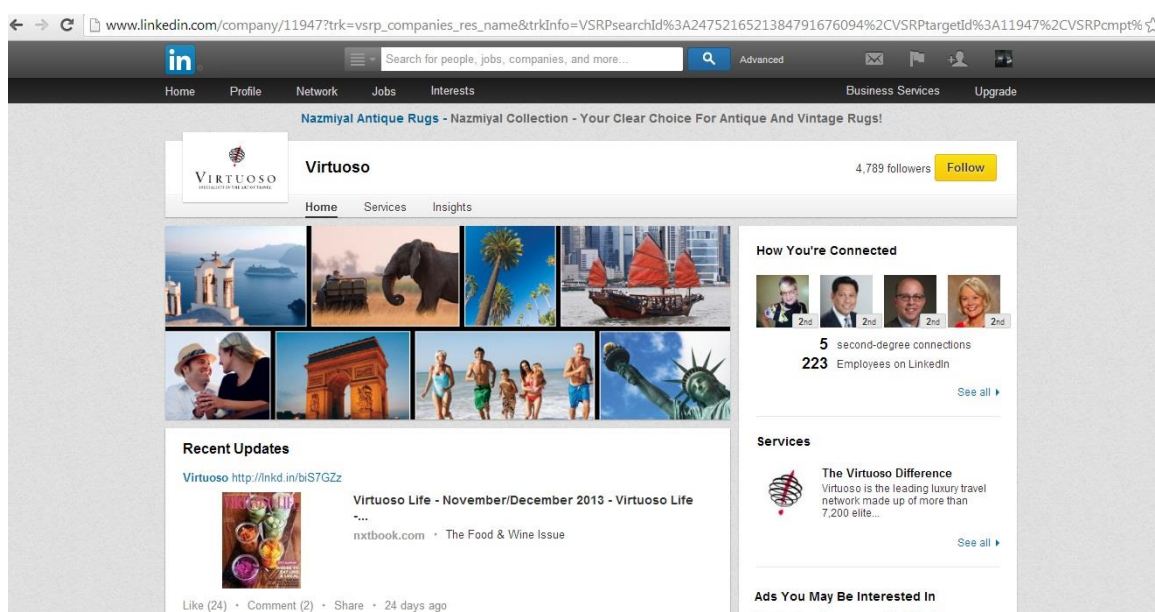


PICTURE 31. Virtuoso’s profile on YouTube

As for the company’s profile on Facebook, here Virtuoso is quite successful and followed by many people. It does not seem to reply to the comments; however, there are comments, which is a good indication of some activity.



PICTURE 32. Virtuoso's profile on Facebook



PICTURE 33. Virtuoso's profile on LinkedIn

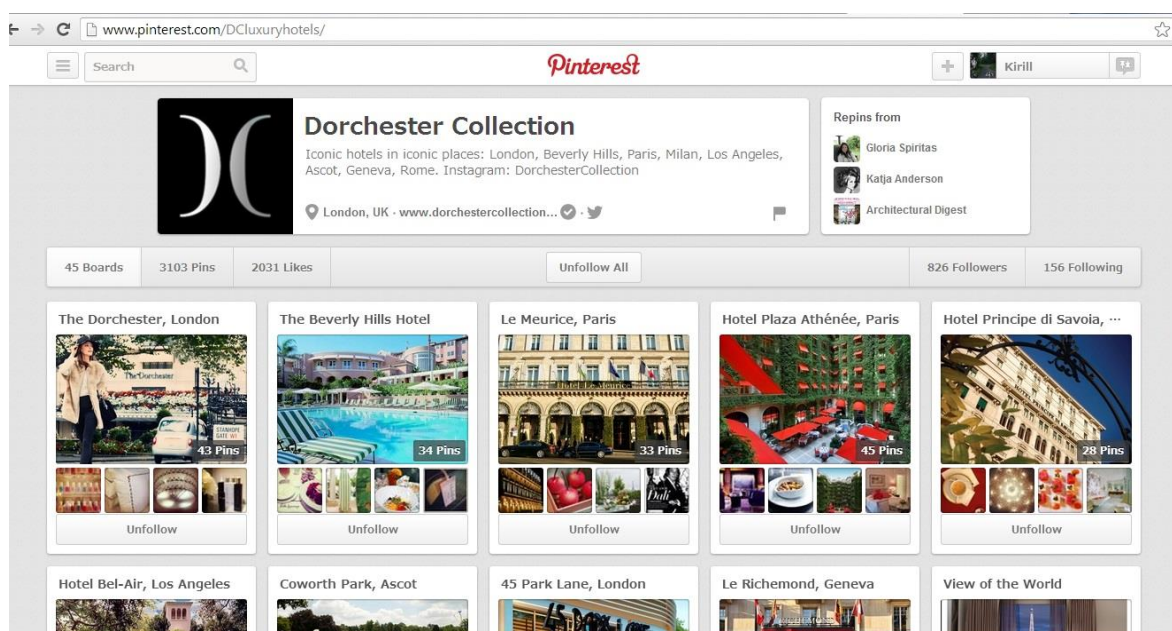
On LinkedIn Virtuoso is not really active, maybe, simply because it is quite new on this network. Despite that, Virtuoso has a good amount of “likes” and some comments under its posts. It is essential for the company to have its profile on LinkedIn, because it links the company directly to its partners. It creates better visibility and advertisement, in a way.



PICTURE 34. Virtuoso's profile on Twitter

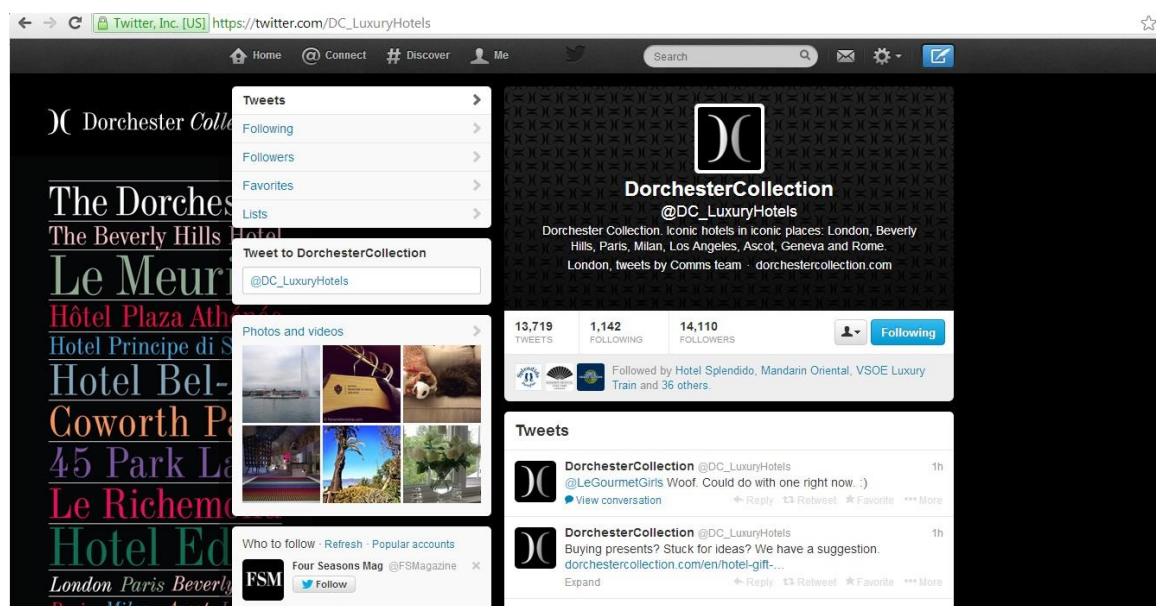
What comes to Twitter, Virtuoso has very many followers; however, there is not much interaction seen at first sight. Unlike Four Seasons Hotels and Resorts, Virtuoso does not have so many comments and, thus, replies. It has a few. As a matter of fact, it seems a little strange, because the company has good connections and so many followers, and, at the same time, it lacks good interaction with customers or followers.

The Dorchester Collection is another partner of Renshaw Travel, which is also available on some social media networks. What comes to Pinterest, the situation here is similar to Renshaw Travel itself. The Dorchester Collection has many nice pictures, even re-pins and “likes” on them, but there is no direct communication.



PICTURE 35. The Dorchester Collection's profile on Pinterest

As for Twitter, The Dorchester Collection has a pretty good activity on this network. Constant updates with replies and re-tweets make the company more visible and interesting for customers and followers.



PICTURE 36. The Dorchester Collection's profile on Twitter

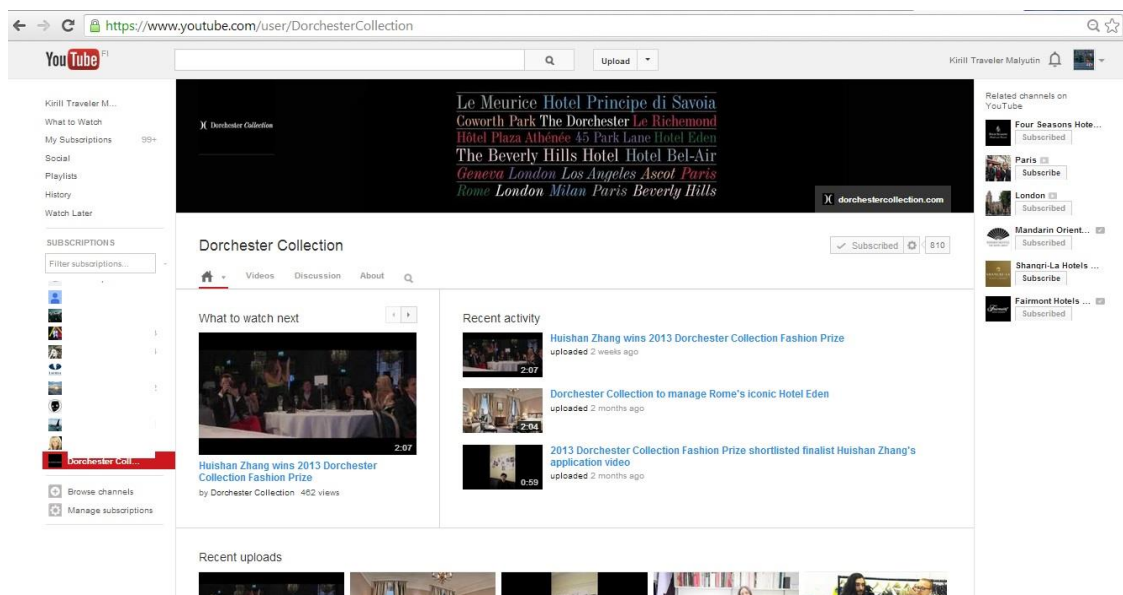
On LinkedIn the company is having good visibility as well. It adds new posts, replies to comments and is involved in communication. This is a good thing to go for The Dorchester Collection.

The screenshot shows the LinkedIn profile of the Dorchester Collection. The header includes the LinkedIn logo, a search bar, and navigation links like Home, Profile, Network, Jobs, and Interests. The profile banner features a collage of hotel images with text listing properties: LE MEURICE, HOTEL EDEN, THE DORCHESTER, COWORTH, PRINCE DI SAVOIA, THE BEVERLY HILLS, HOTEL LE RICHMOND, 45 PARK LANE, and BEL-AIR. The profile name is 'Dorchester Collection' with 5,165 followers and a 'Following' button. Below the banner, there are sections for 'Recent Updates' (a post about a job opening as Chef de Partie at The Grill), 'Careers' (a link to a careers page), 'How You're Connected' (showing 199 employees on LinkedIn), 'Products' (a message about products and services), and 'Ads By LinkedIn Members' (an ad for Stop Climate Change).

PICTURE 37. The Dorchester Collection's profile on LinkedIn

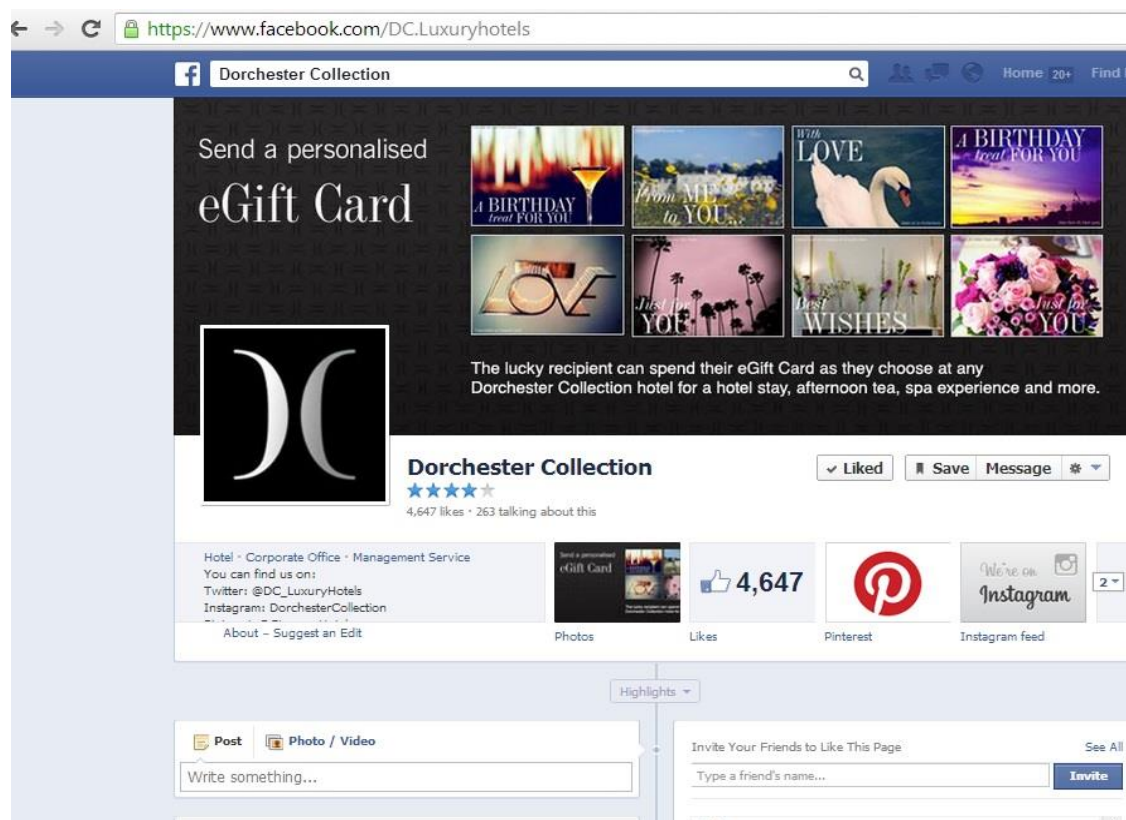
The screenshot shows the Google+ profile of the Dorchester Collection. The header includes the Google+ logo and a search bar. The profile banner features a collage of hotel images with text listing properties: Le Meurice, Hotel Principe di Savoia, Coworth Park, The Dorchester, Le Richmond, Hotel Plaza Athénée, 45 Park Lane, Hotel Eden, The Beverly Hills Hotel, Hotel Bel-Air, Geneva, London, Los Angeles, Ascol, Paris, Rome, London, Milan, Paris, Beverly Hills. The profile name is 'Dorchester Collection' with 3,304 followers and a 'Following' button. Below the banner, there are tabs for 'About', 'Posts', 'Photos', and 'YouTube'. A post is visible, shared publicly at 12:52 PM, mentioning a stay at Le Richmond by Flanerie Feminine. On the right, there is a section 'In their circles' showing 36 people, including Gertrude & Ivy, Hotel Principe di Savoia, and Hotel Bel-Air, each with a 'Follow' button.

PICTURE 38. The Dorchester Collection's profile on Google+



PICTURE 39. The Dorchester Collection's profile on YouTube

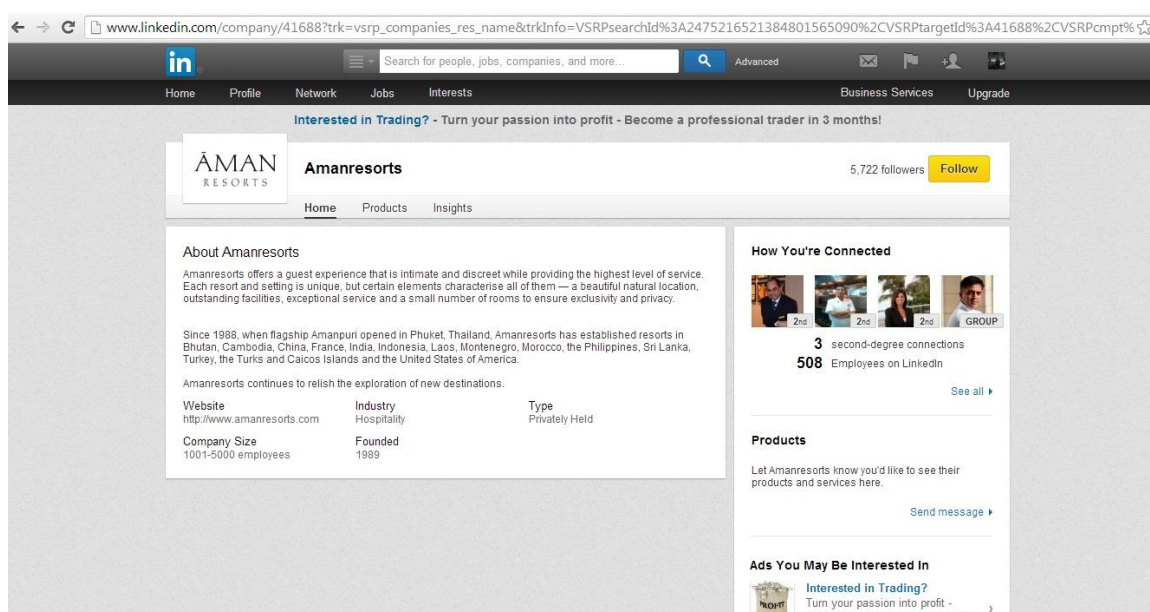
Speaking about Google+ and YouTube, the situation is comparable with Pinterest, where The Dorchester Collection is not very active; therefore, there is a room for development in this direction. YouTube is extremely popular and is one of the main sources for companies to increase their visibility.



PICTURE 40. The Dorchester Collection's profile on Facebook

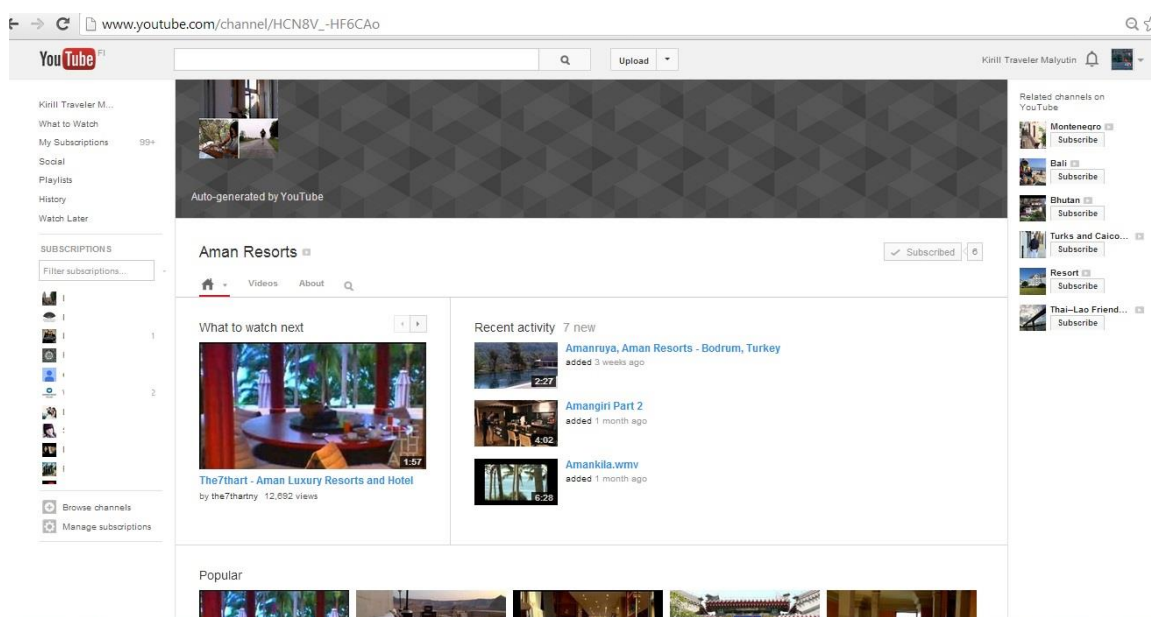
As for Facebook, The Dorchester Collection made good efforts to be visible. The company has many followers, many “likes” and comments under its posts with its own replies. It is a good sign of communication; however, it seems that the company could be a little more active on this network and attract more people.

What comes to Aman Resorts, we could not find its presence on Google+, Pinterest or Twitter. As for LinkedIn, the company has its profile but with no activity at all. Despite that, Aman Resorts have lots of followers on this network. An overall image of the company on LinkedIn may seem a bit abandoned.



PICTURE 41. Aman Resorts’s profile on LinkedIn

On YouTube the company is not very active yet, it does not have a big amount of views for its videos or “likes”. It seems to be paying less attention to YouTube.



PICTURE 42. Aman Resorts's profile on YouTube

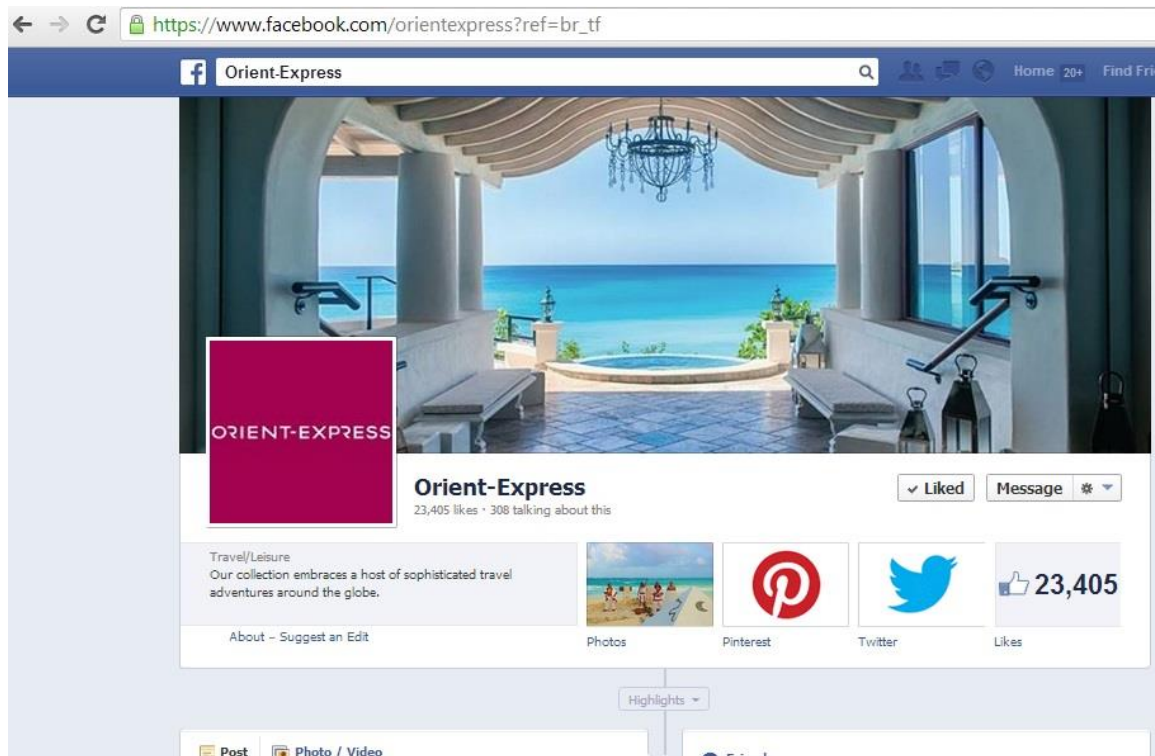


PICTURE 43. Aman Resorts's profile on Facebook

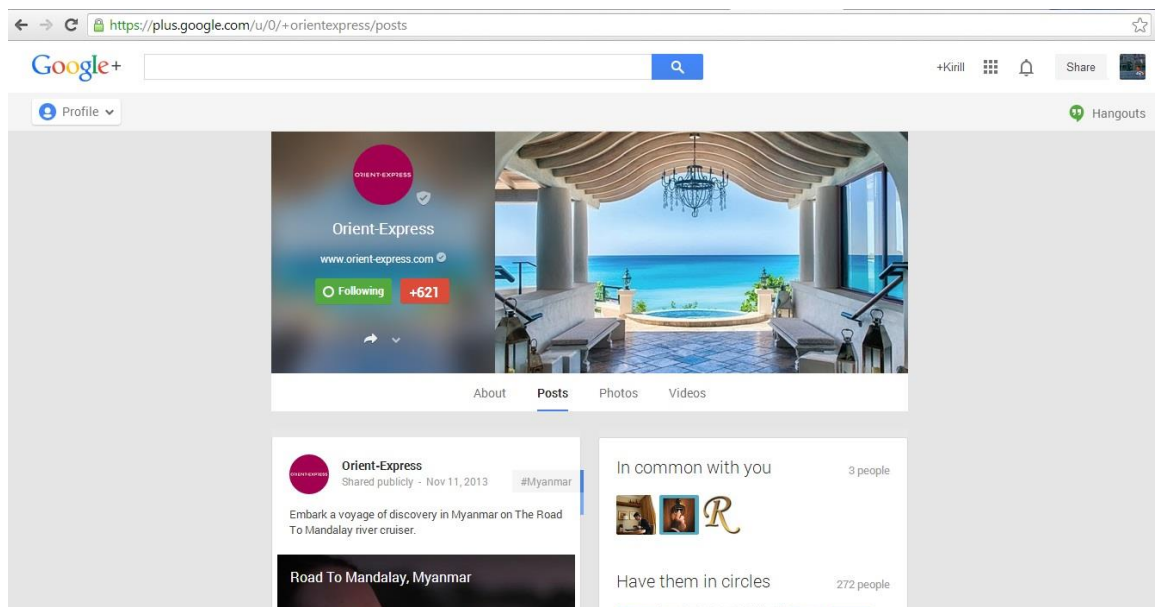
As for Facebook, Aman Resorts have their presence on this network. A good number of followers are a good indicator, as well as a number of comments. However, the company does not seem to respond to comments at all, which is easily seen.

What comes to Orient-Express Hotels and Resorts, this chain has its presence on the major social media networks. First of all, it is Facebook, where the company is pretty active and in-

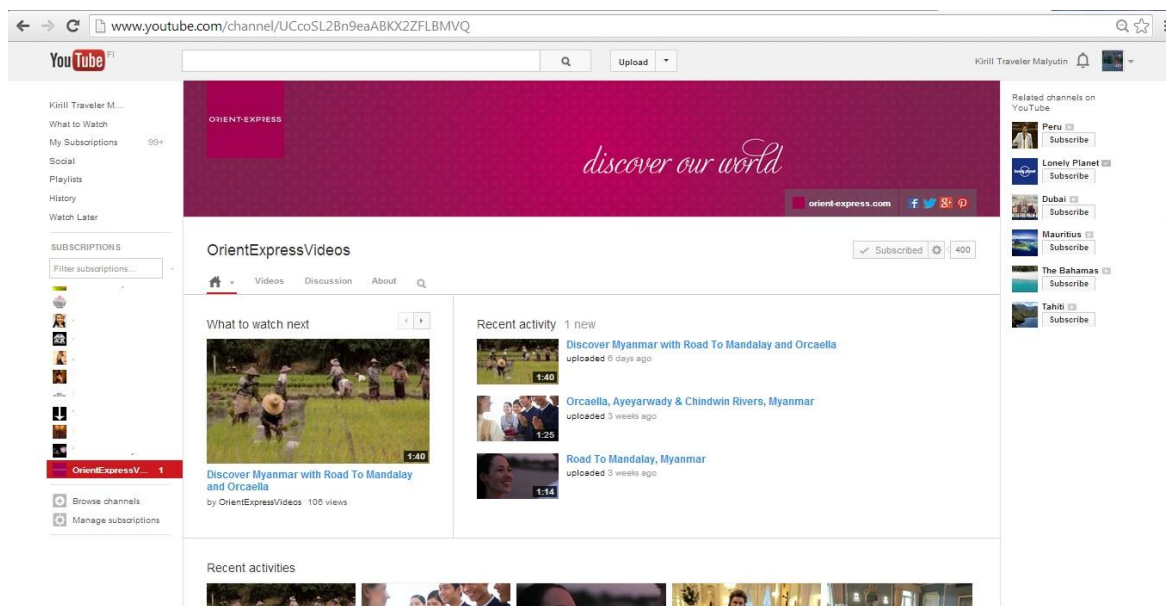
volved in communication with followers and customers. It is a good sign for Orient-Express Hotels and Resorts.



PICTURE 44. Orient-Express Hotels and Resorts's profile on Facebook



PICTURE 45. Orient-Express Hotels and Resorts's profile on Google+



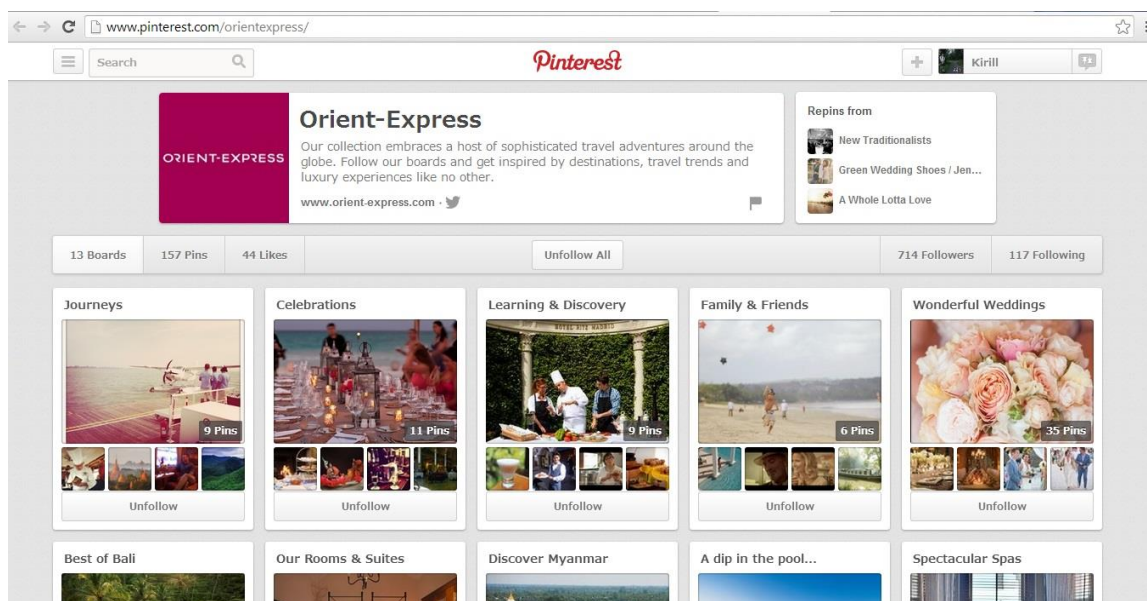
PICTURE 46. Orient-Express Hotels and Resorts’s profile on YouTube

Unlike Facebook, the situation on Google+ and YouTube is a little surprising. The company is quite visible and has many followers, but too little “likes” or comments and, thus, no replies at first sight. It rather shows the company’s lack of particular interest to these networks.



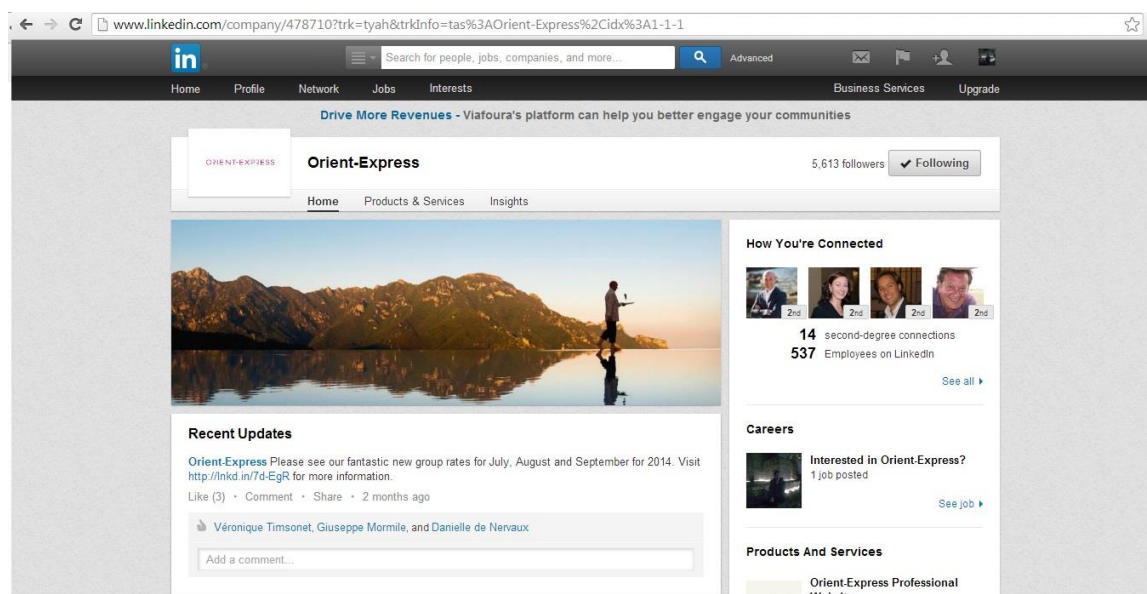
PICTURE 47. Orient-Express Hotels and Resorts’s profile on Twitter

On Twitter Orient-Express Hotels and Resorts are showing pretty good performance; though, with a room for development and improvement in terms of better activity. It is a rapidly growing network, and being able to keep up with its pace means being viable to survive in the online world.



PICTURE 48. Orient-Express Hotels and Resorts's profile on Pinterest

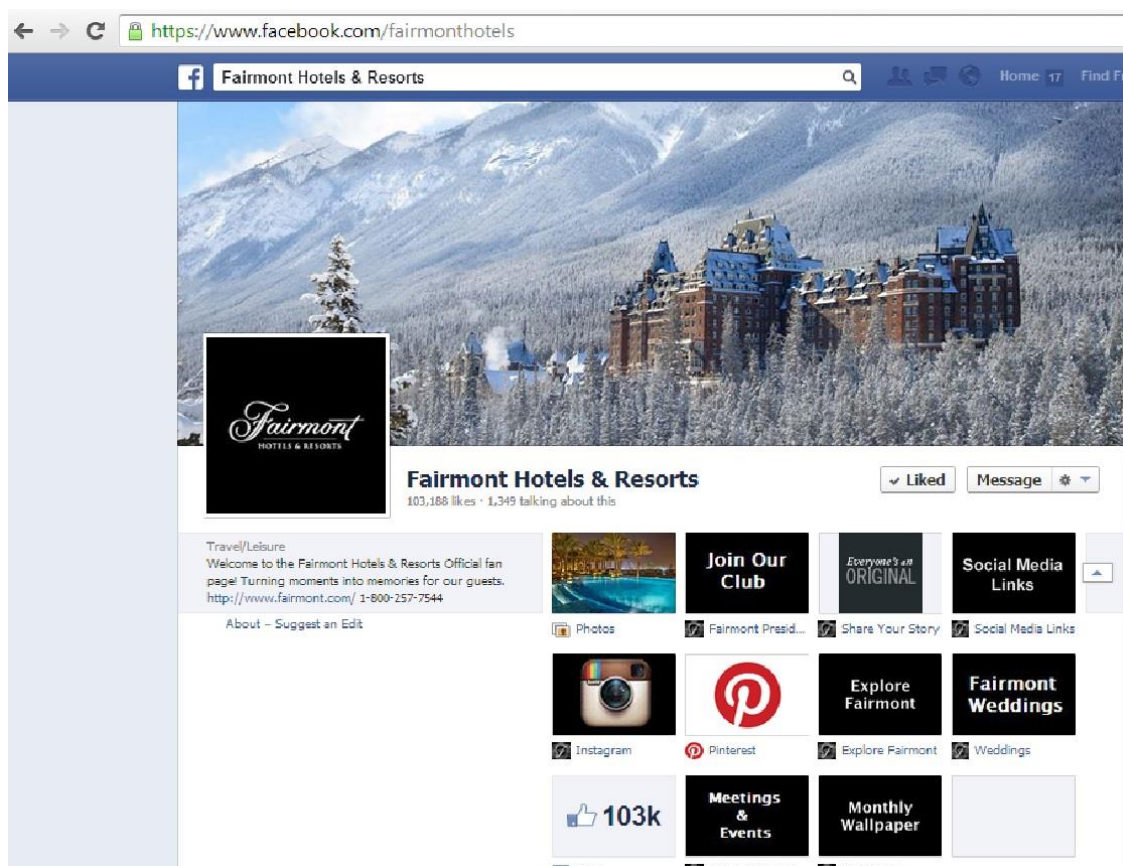
What comes to Pinterest, here the company has quite many followers and constant updates, which come as pictures.



PICTURE 49. Orient-Express Hotels and Resorts's profile on LinkedIn

As for LinkedIn, here the company is not active at all. It has a few posts with some “likes” under them. This is a business card of the company, but it seems to be empty. Perhaps, there is in plans for Orient-Express Hotels and Resorts.

The last among partners is the Fairmont Hotels and Resorts. The chain has its presence on the most popular networks. If we start from Facebook, we can, clearly, see that the company is extremely active here. It can be compared with Four Seasons' presence on Facebook. These two companies are pretty strong in terms of the online presence, as well as the real (offline) presence.

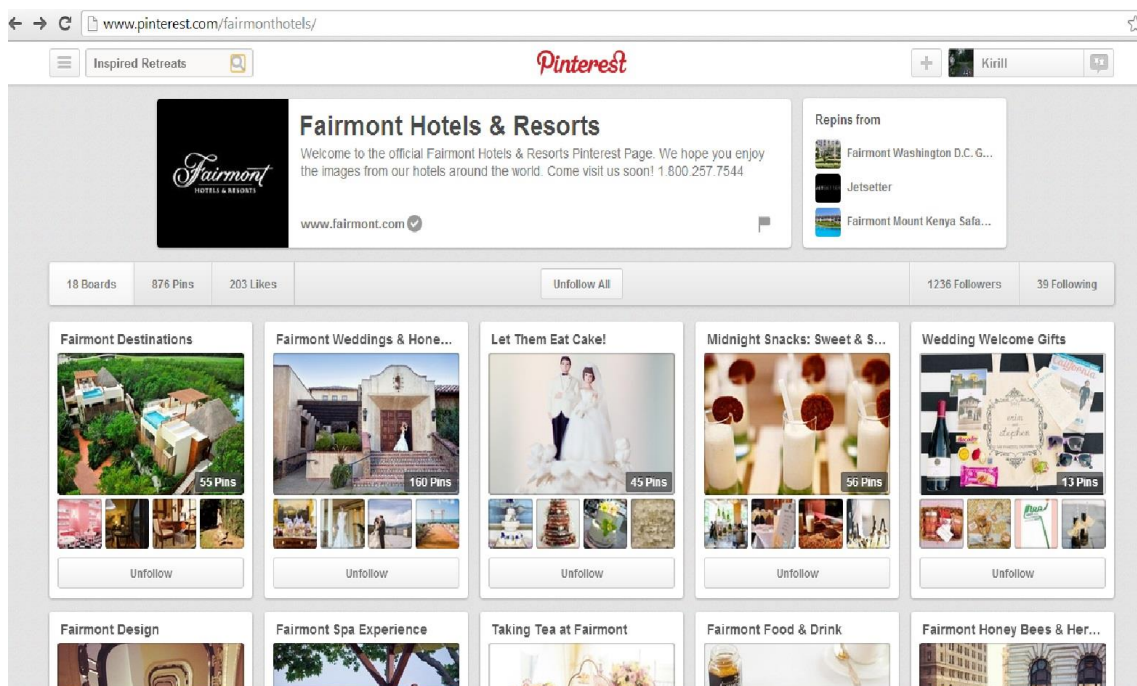


PICTURE 50. The Fairmont Hotels and Resorts's profile on Facebook

As for Twitter, the Fairmont Hotels and Resorts are also very active there and try to keep up with that pace. Another point to mention is that the company has lots of pictures posted via Twitter, which makes its profile even more attractive.

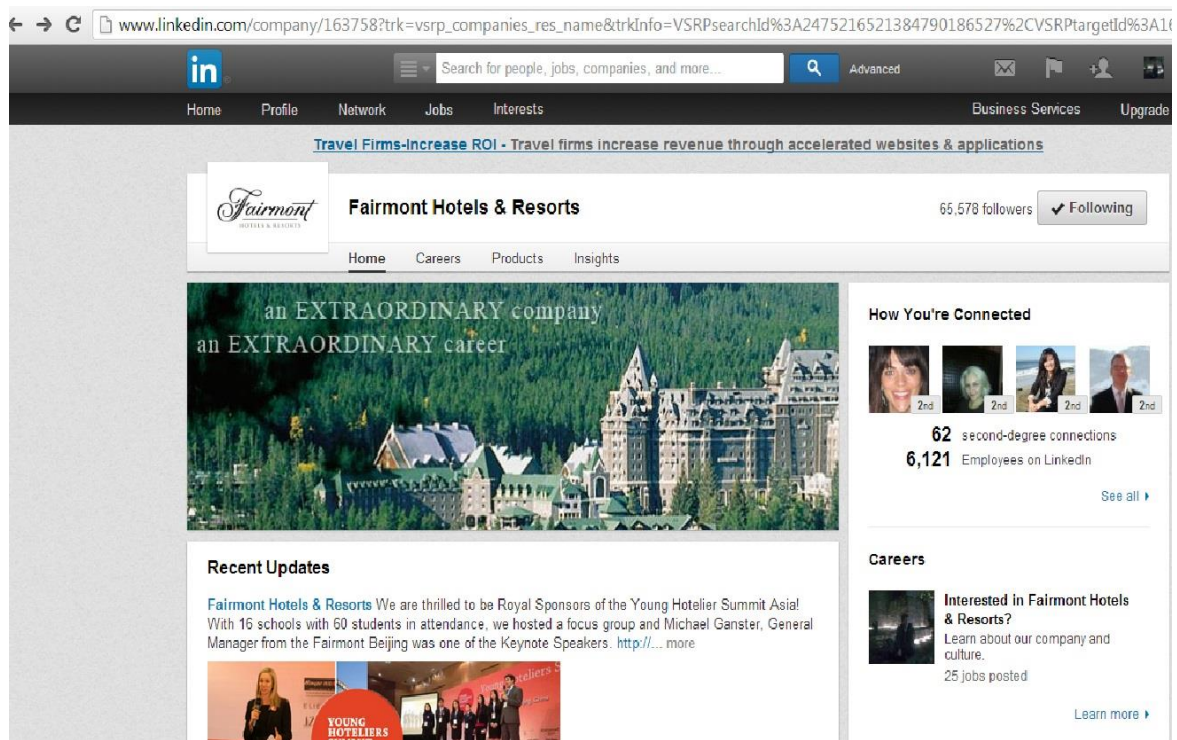


PICTURE 51. The Fairmont Hotels and Resorts's profile on Twitter



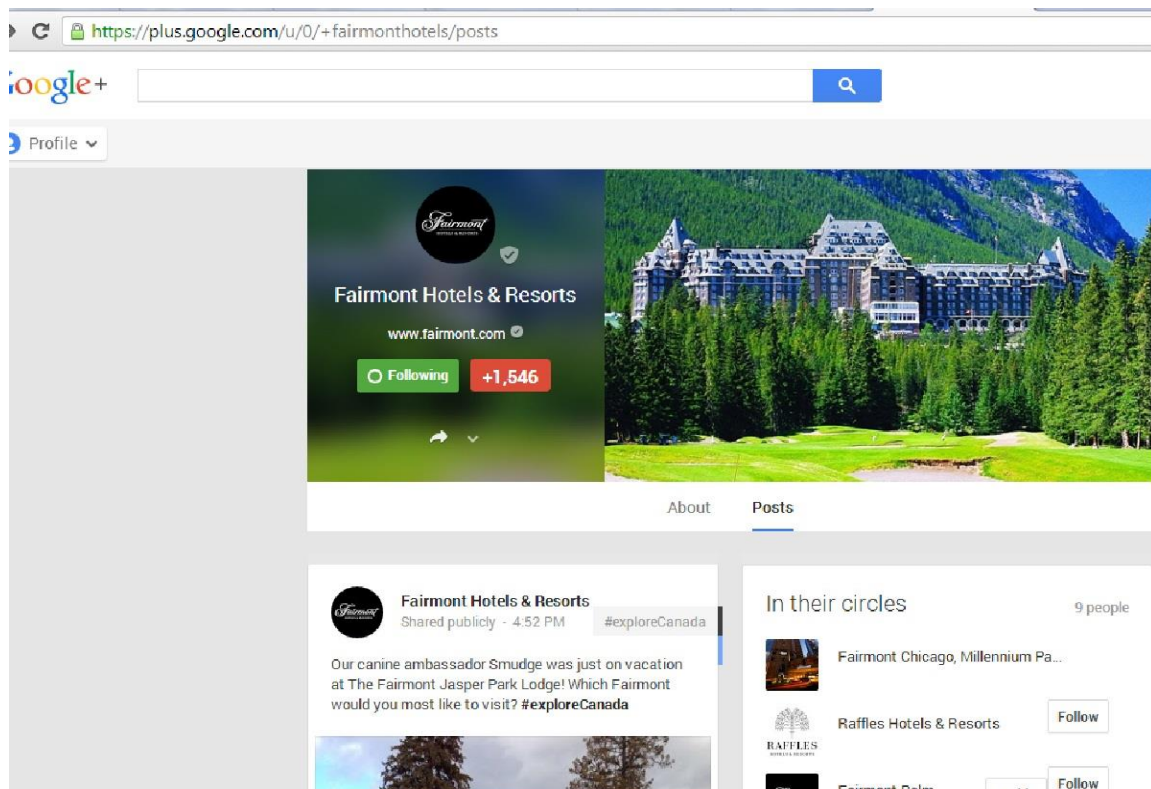
PICTURE 52. The Fairmont Hotels and Resorts's profile on Pinterest

The company's presence on Pinterest is also essential, since it has a plenty of followers, who re-pin and "like" a lot. Despite such success, there is not much of direct interaction possible on Pinterest; however, the Fairmont Hotels and Resorts manage to make constant updates and remain visible.

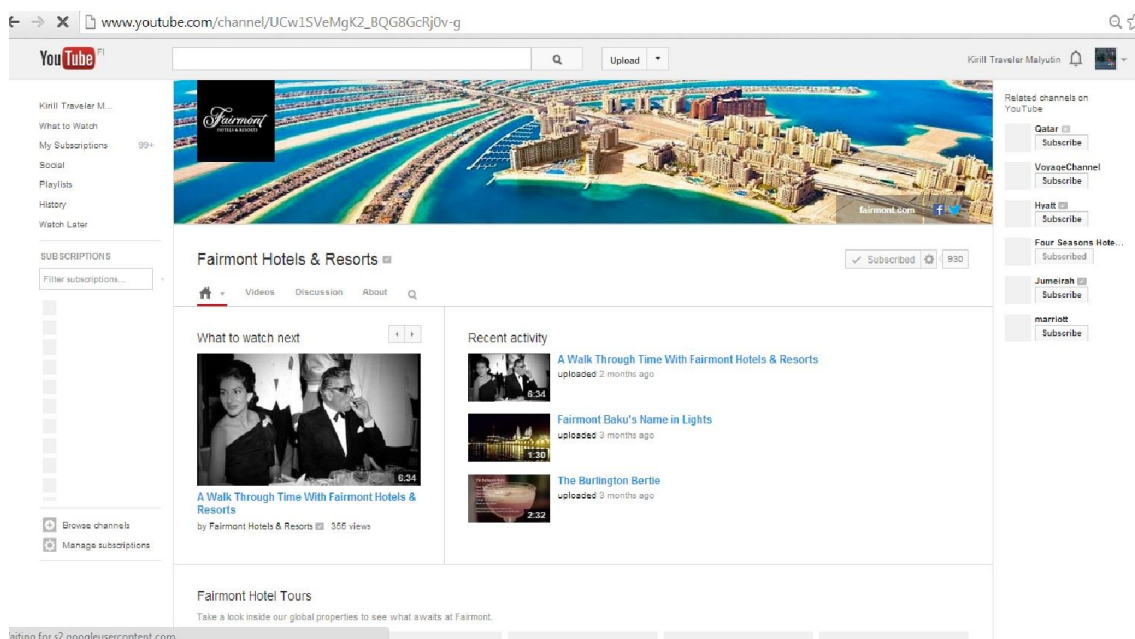


PICTURE 53. The Fairmont Hotels and Resorts's profile on LinkedIn

On LinkedIn the Fairmont chain is presented very professionally; though, there are not too many posts yet. Perhaps, the Fairmont Hotels and Resorts are simply new on this network; however, such great look is already an advantage.



PICTURE 54. The Fairmont Hotels and Resorts's profile on Google+



PICTURE 55. The Fairmont Hotels and Resorts’s profile on YouTube

What comes to Google+ and YouTube, the Fairmont Hotels and Resorts have a pretty good level of visibility. They have lots of followers and “likes” under their posts. As for YouTube specifically, the Fairmont Hotels and Resorts upload the most astonishing videos, which are well viewed and commented. A wide range of videos reflects the company’s activity and care concerning its followers’ and customers’ interest. This is a very good indication of the online presence.

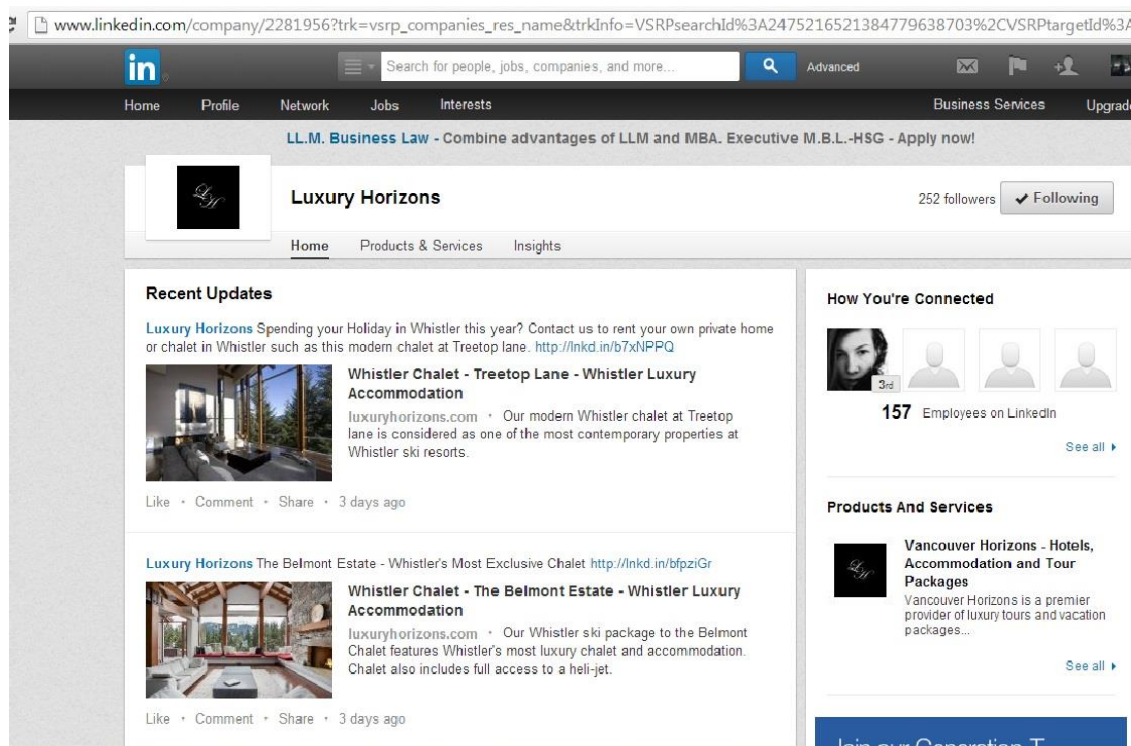
Summing up, it is worth to mention that some of the companies were easier to find on social media, some were not. It is a small but a very important issue concerning the proper use of the Internet. As a matter of fact, we reviewed separate and combined profiles, i.e. specifically for a chain and individual hotels from those chains, in order to have a better picture of the companies’ activities. In our description we write about all of them combined as a general representation of a chain. We also made a list of question for Renshaw Travel partners; however, it was a time limit working against us and we were too late to send those questions to the company’s partners; that is why we have not received replies from them by the moment.

Thus, we are able to make some conclusions, which can help us to compare Renshaw Travel’s and its partners’ online activities. It is quite obvious that huge companies have more presence and visibility on social media; however, first of all, it is a matter of focus, but only then it is a

question of resources. The company's ability to be active and keep up with the online pace of life is crucial to remain among the top.

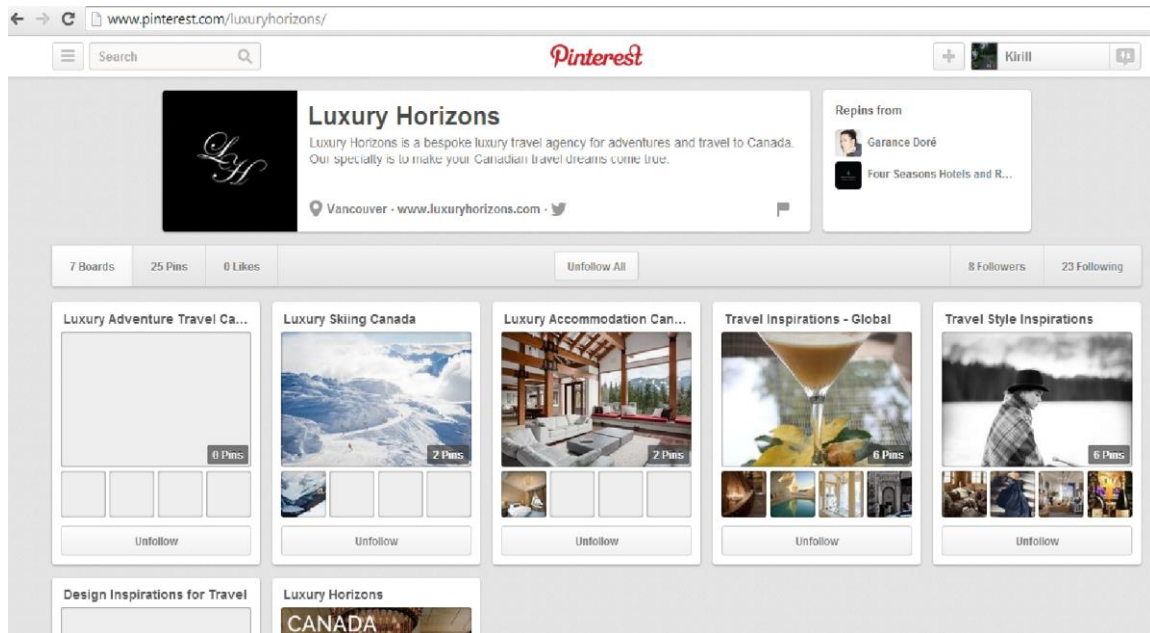
5.4.3 The competitors' interaction with customers and online visibility

What comes to Renshaw Travel's competitors, it is also necessary to review their presence on social media and compare with the company's partners and the company itself. The first one to start from is Luxury Horizons travel agency.



PICTURE 56. Luxury Horizons' profile on LinkedIn

Luxury Horizons travel agency, first of all, has its profile on LinkedIn. Despite the small number of posts, the company already has its followers. The company seems to be new on this network, as well as on Pinterest, where it has a couple of albums only.

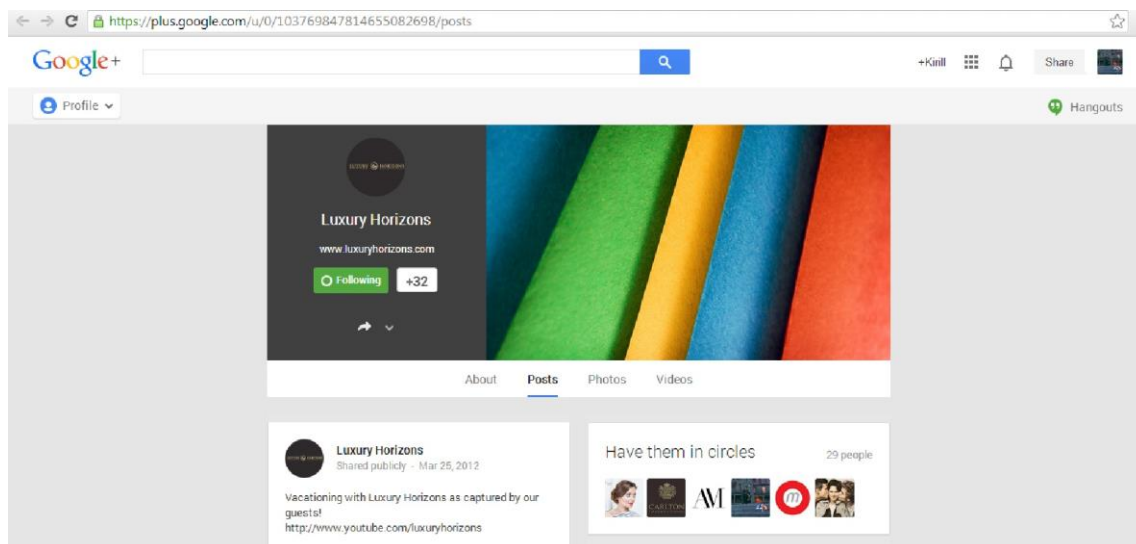


PICTURE 57. Luxury Horizons' profile on Pinterest

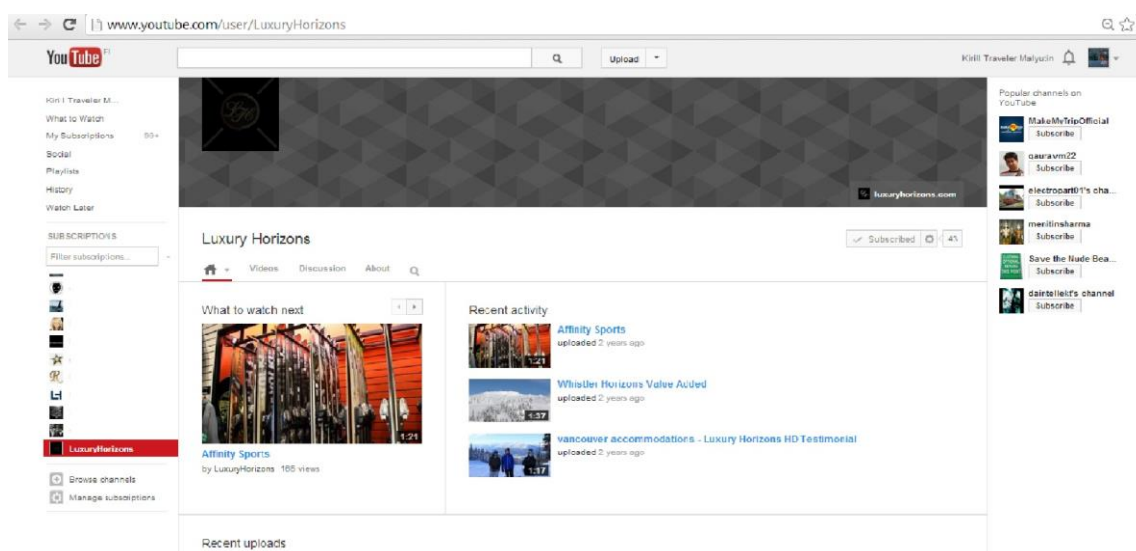


PICTURE 58. Luxury Horizons' profile on Twitter

As for Twitter, here Luxury Horizons travel agency has many followers and plenty of updates; however, direct communication is relatively low. The same applies to its Facebook profile page, where it has rather good activity, but too little direct interaction yet.



PICTURE 59. Luxury Horizons' profile on Google+



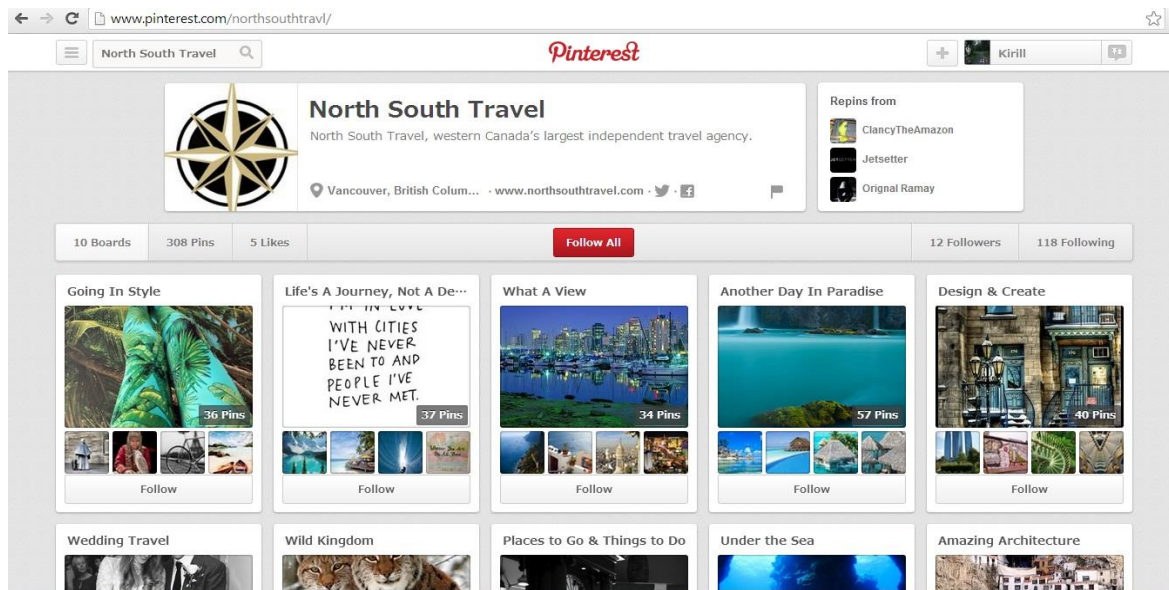
PICTURE 60. Luxury Horizons' profile on YouTube

What comes to Google+ and YouTube, here the company is very new or pays too little attention. It does have good videos on YouTube with a fairly good number of views, but there is a strong lack of direct interaction with customers and followers. And Luxury Horizons' Google+ page has just two posts at the moment with a very unattractive background for its profile picture. Unlike the company's official website, which looks very much professional, its presence on social media is under a big question yet.

As a matter of fact, there is an interesting story with Inspired Retreats luxury travel agency. We could not find any presence on social media. Perhaps, the company is too young and did not have much time to establish its visibility on social media. However, the company's official

website looks very professional; though, it lacks some points. Therefore, it is not possible to compare it with other rivals at the moment.

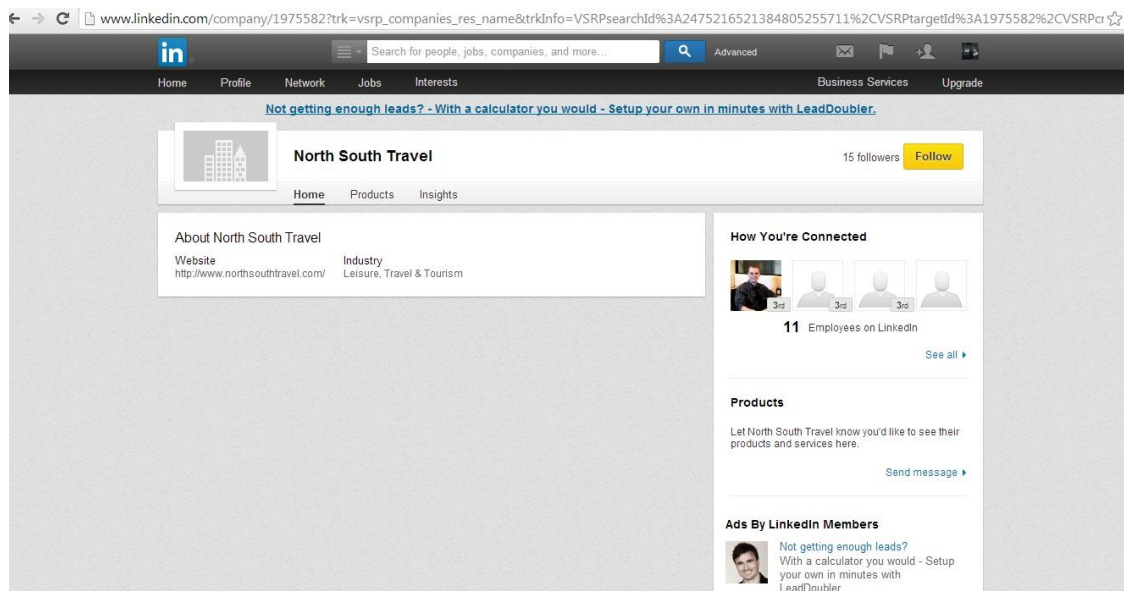
Another luxury travel agency, which is North South Travel, does not have its profile on Facebook. It is quite strange, because Facebook is very popular and growing day by day. On Pinterest the company has a few followers but some activity.



PICTURE 61. North South Travel' profile on Pinterest

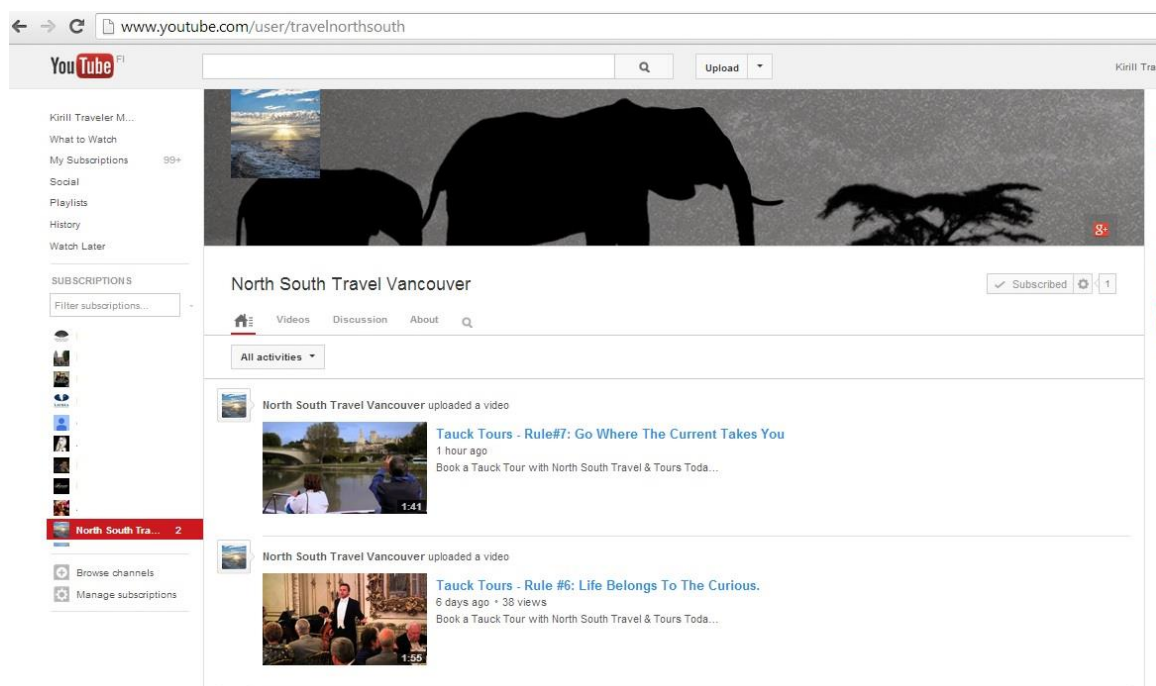


PICTURE 62. North South Travel' profile on Twitter

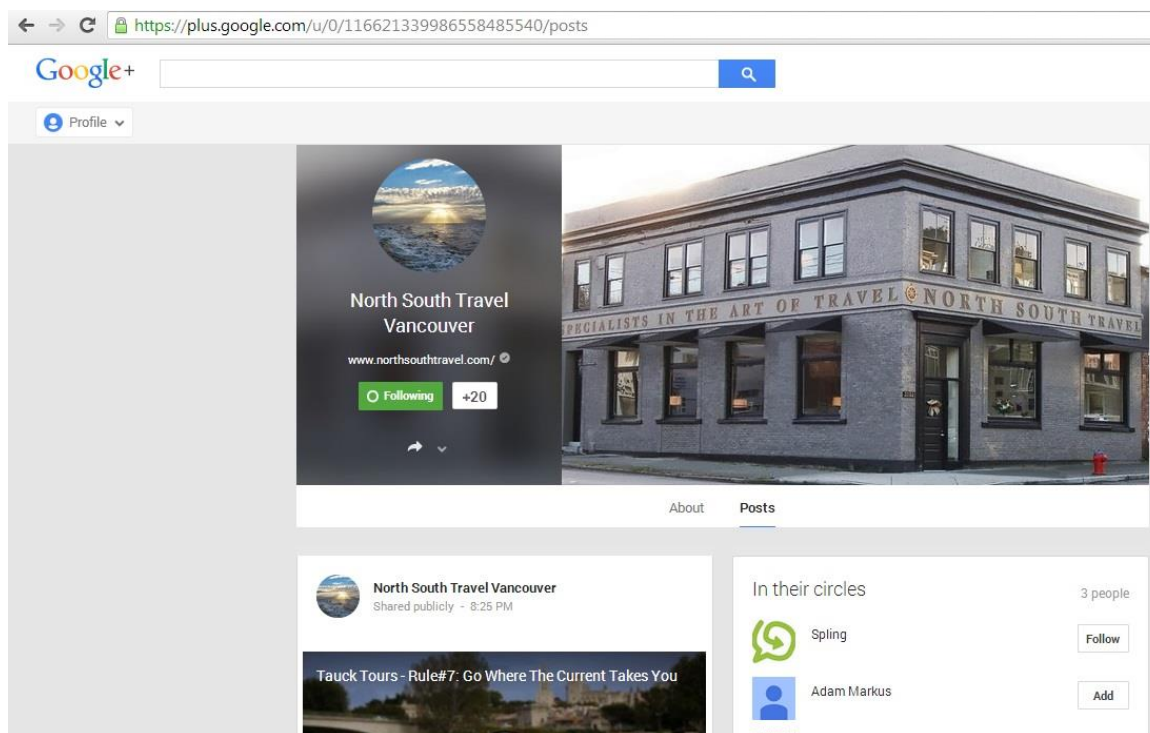


PICTURE 63. North South Travel' profile on LinkedIn

What comes to LinkedIn and Twitter, the company is really new on these networks, because on LinkedIn it has minimum information with no activity. On Twitter it has regular updates, but not too many followers yet and lack of direct interaction with customers.



PICTURE 64. North South Travel' profile on YouTube



PICTURE 65. North South Travel' profile on Google+

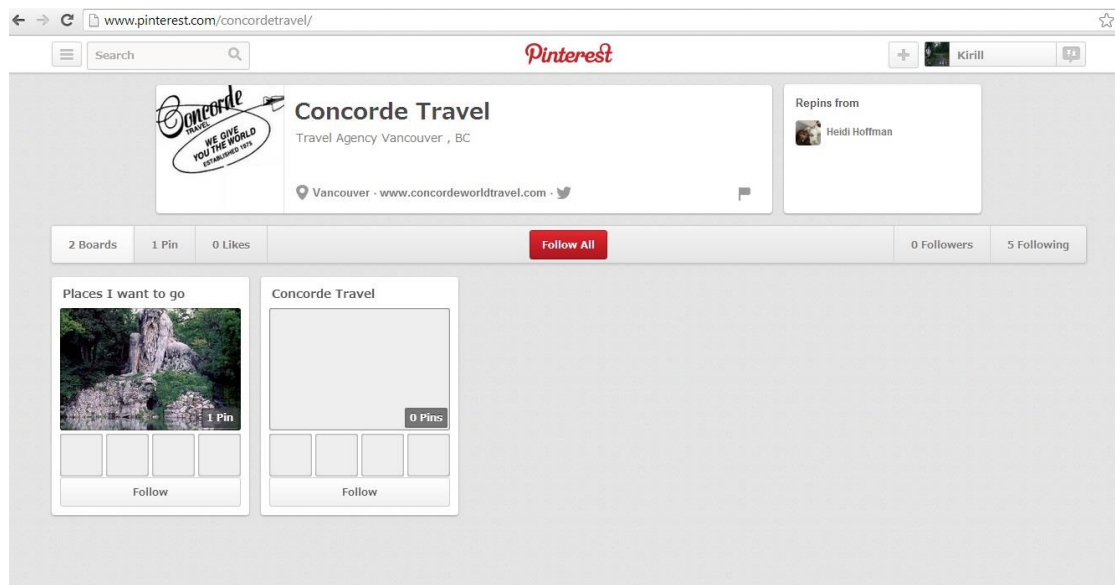
As for Google+ and YouTube, it has the same story. A date of upload and a very small number of views on YouTube, and a small amount of posts on Google+ show that North South Travel is not visible on these networks. The company obviously seems to be very young and has not established its online presence yet. Though, it's official website looks quite promising.

Concerning Concorde Travel, we have found several companies with the same name, but from different countries. Therefore, we need to concentrate on that particular travel agency, which is located in Vancouver, Canada.

First of all, Concorde Travel is quite new on social networks. The company has just two followers on Facebook and no followers on Pinterest (at the moment). Perhaps, the situation is going to change soon.

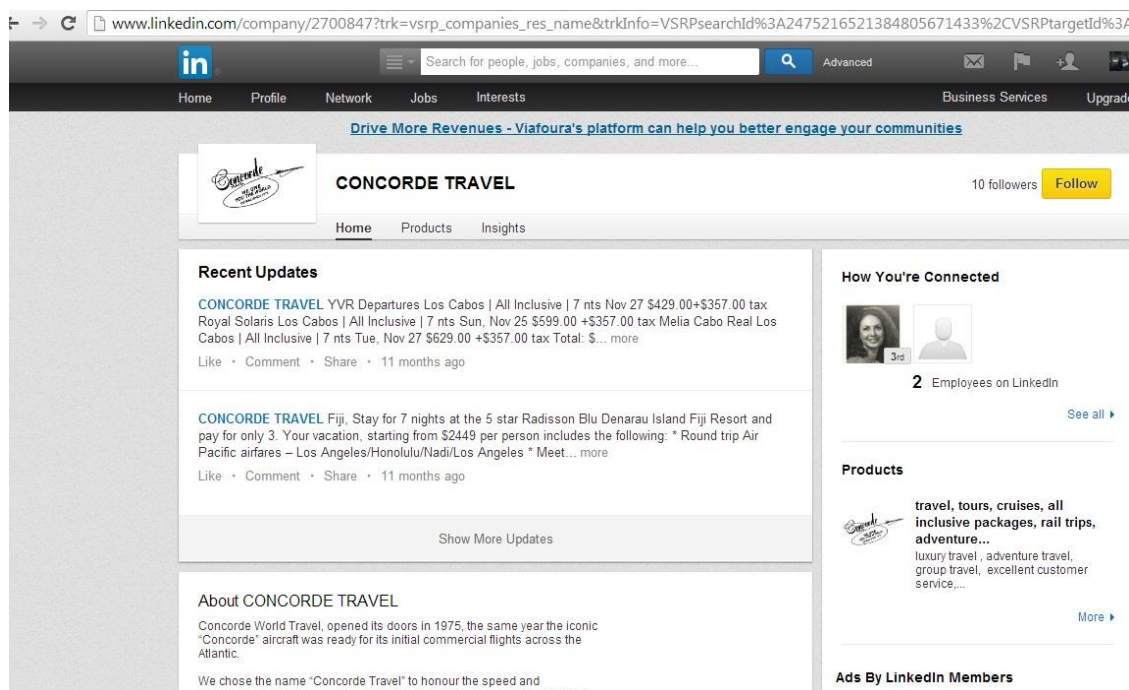


PICTURE 66. Concorde Travel' profile on Facebook



PICTURE 67. Concorde Travel' profile on Pinterest

What comes to LinkedIn and Twitter, Concorde Travel has some followers; however, it is far from being competitive against other luxury travel agencies.



PICTURE 68. Concorde Travel' profile on LinkedIn



PICTURE 69. Concorde Travel' profile on Twitter

Since there is no visible direct interaction with followers or customers, Concorde Travel can hardly be viable in terms of huge companies or well-established travel agencies.

Thus, we are able to conclude that none of the companies, presented in this part of the thesis, can be worthy equal competitors to Renshaw Travel. Obviously, they have a huge potential and they are too young at the moment. It takes time to establish good relationships and part-

nerships with other companies, hotels, etc. These companies are growing, but still have a lot to gain and learn. It is good in terms of development; they know where they are headed.

As a matter of fact, we should mention that we also tried to contact these companies via e-mail. We sent our messages long ago, but we have not received any response back yet. It indicates rather poor willingness to cooperate and, actually, contact their potential customers or partners, because you never know what the future might bring. Therefore, we can conclude that Renshaw Travel still holds its strong position in the luxury travel market and keeps good relationships with its partners.

5.4.4 Customer satisfaction

Customer satisfaction is a very essential aspect to discuss, because any service you provide is meant for customers; thus, your success strongly depends on how satisfied your customer is. In this context we should always remember about the customer perceived value (CPV), which is “the difference between the prospective customer’ evaluation of all the benefits and all the costs of an offering and the perceived alternatives” (Kotler, Keller 2006, 141). This is especially important in luxury services, because the meaning comprises a high level of quality, and the service itself is priced accordingly.

Nowadays, in luxury travel business luxury advisors try to make more efforts and connect the service itself, including its core, luxury experience, with something personal, attached to the one, who is consuming the service. In other words, customers or consumers will keep good memories from their luxury vacation, chosen and prepared especially for them with an exclusive service, so that they could feel special even afterwards. Therefore, in the future, this memory is linked with that place and the company, which provided that service, and also the network, which the company was found on. It is very crucial in contemporary world of a fierce competition, when it is part of the company’s existence if consumers remember it and cherish the same well as the memories themselves.

Renshaw Travel is creating a so-called profile for each individual so that a consumer is served as a very special and respected V.I.P. guest/client. Each travel advisor has his or her own database, in which they keep all the data about their clients, i.e. preferences, previous experience, interests, special needs (if applied), budget to be afforded, some family profiles, so that

they could know what to choose based on the information provided. This certainly gives the company a competitive advantage, which cannot be replicated by the rivals.

This aspect can be discussed in terms of customer loyalty. Obviously, this approach is not completely everything; it is always about people and their attitude towards their clients (consumers of the service). Luxury travel advisors make it so special for consumers, who are treated as family, as part of the Renshaw family. Thus, consumers know, remember and love their luxury travel advisors and always get back for new luxury experience. “The real power in business is the people” (Danziger 2005, 271), and it is certainly true. People run companies, people tell stories and, thus, use word-of-mouth method even not knowing that, and people make purchases and consumer services. It only proves that people are the driving force in any business. That is why the ability to have a customized and special approach and attitude is crucial.

However, this is certainly not enough. If solely relied on good attitude, the company might become “outdated” and not capable to keep up with the latest trends, demands and changes. Besides, any company needs good promotions to remain visible and also to attract new consumers. It is also a question of aging “luxury travel generation”. It is clear that new “generations” of luxury consumers are required for the company’s future existence, and social media can attract new and younger clientele.

The industry, which Renshaw Travel operates in, has evolved through the Internet-age. Nowadays, roughly 57 percent of all the travel bookings around the world are made online (Statistic Brain, 2013b). According to one of the respondent’s reply, about 80 percent of the clientele brought to the company through Renshaw Travel website, as well as through social media.

Partnership with different luxury hotels, Virtuoso and other related companies is, evidently, important for long-term operations. Suppliers need a channel, which they gain new customers from, and Renshaw Travel carries out additional branding with heavily visualized advertising besides working as a medium between high-profile tourism and hospitality establishment.

The individual management and customization of social media have made it possible to downsize the costs of the Internet marketing. It has led up to the current business applications that run alongside the standard versions of Facebook, Twitter and all the other networks; and

that is where the challenge lies. Luxury travel industry thrives on offering a chance for something special and personally designed tourist experience, giving people what they want.

“The marketing concept holds that the key to achieving organizational goals consists in determining the desired satisfactions more effectively and efficiently than competitors” (Bisht, Belwal, Pande 2010, 28). It is necessary to remember to be able to survive in a fierce competition. It is also essential to know that “today’s new luxury consumers focus in the goods and services they buy, not in ownership or possession itself” (Danziger 2005, 7). The new focus of luxury (in general) is about experience from a consumer’s perspective. A new view of it comprises everything, for instance, ease of finding, ease of purchase and personalized service. It even often includes a simple free cup of coffee for customers, while being in the office to choose the most appropriate destination and sing papers. Such small details are paid much attention to. “Customers today are more experienced, more sophisticated, and more knowledgeable about their choices and better informed of available options”; therefore, it is important to be capable to have something extra, an augmented service in your “pocket” (Bisht, Belwal, Pande 2010, 76). Customers have the power to decide and shape the industry; thus, companies must keep up with the latest trends and be available and visible on various social media to be reached.

5.5 SWOT analysis of Renshaw Travel

Obviously, after the research, conducted for this thesis, it is a good thing to make a SWOT Analysis. It is a good source of visibility of all major points, concerning each of the SWOT components.

Starting from Strengths, we can clearly see that Renshaw Travel has quite a good “baggage” within its activities. First of all, the company has good reputation and a solid expertise in this business. Reliable partners are another proof of that. Renshaw Travel emphasizes its good connections and relationships with partners. Another quite a distinctive feature the company has is history. Since it is the family business, it differs from the other companies greatly. It is one of the core components for Renshaw Travel. Besides, its personalized approach towards each individual client and internal database, combined together, is a huge advantage for the company.

The company's ability to use the Internet is essential in the XXI century, because you can reach your clientele in any corner of the world. Besides, fierce competition mostly shifted into the online world, where the company's presence is somehow crucial. On the other hand, Renshaw Travel's physical location is quite advantageous; it is a good indicator of the company's wealth; thus, ability to provide a promised service.

What comes to Weaknesses, Renshaw Travel has certain fields, where it lacks its presence or activeness. Some of the social media networks are not covered the way they could have been. For instance, their partners, Fairmont Hotels and Resorts or Four Seasons Hotels and Resorts are much more active on social media and gain more visibility and easier reach by customers and simply followers. Another point to mention is time of the reply to "not very important clients". It is disappointing in a way that Renshaw Travel gives its priority to its loyal customers; whereas, some of the potential customers are left in the "shadow"; even though, they might become their loyal customers.

As for opportunities, here Renshaw Travel has a lot of directions to choose. First of all, it can expand and open up a new office in another city of Canada, for example, in Toronto. On the other hand, the company can simply emphasize its Internet activities and capture more of the online market. Secondly, Renshaw Travel can establish more partnerships with other luxury hotels, or, perhaps, with airline operators on the same terms and conditions as with hotels.

Speaking about Threats, it is worth to mention that there can be so many factors, which might influence the company's ability to operate or operate in the same way. It can be a simple change in partnerships; new terms and conditions may be applied. This can shape the whole existence of Renshaw Travel. On the other hand, there can be new competitors, which are going to become really strong in this luxury market. Moreover, we should always remember about a risk of a financial crisis in the world, as well as a simple change of a regime in one of the destinations. Anything of that can have a huge impact on Renshaw Travel's future operations.

A simple decrease in demand on luxury travel can be another aspect to consider. Due to different reasons, people can start traveling less and, thus, change the whole industry. As a matter of fact, one of the worst and easiest negative influences may come from a simple word-of-mouth. "It is not always possible to control word of mouth, but it should always be within

one's media tool kit..." (Harden, Heyman 2009, 18). This is certainly true. Some companies spread a positive word-of-mouth, in order to establish a better reputation and be able to influence that, when needed.

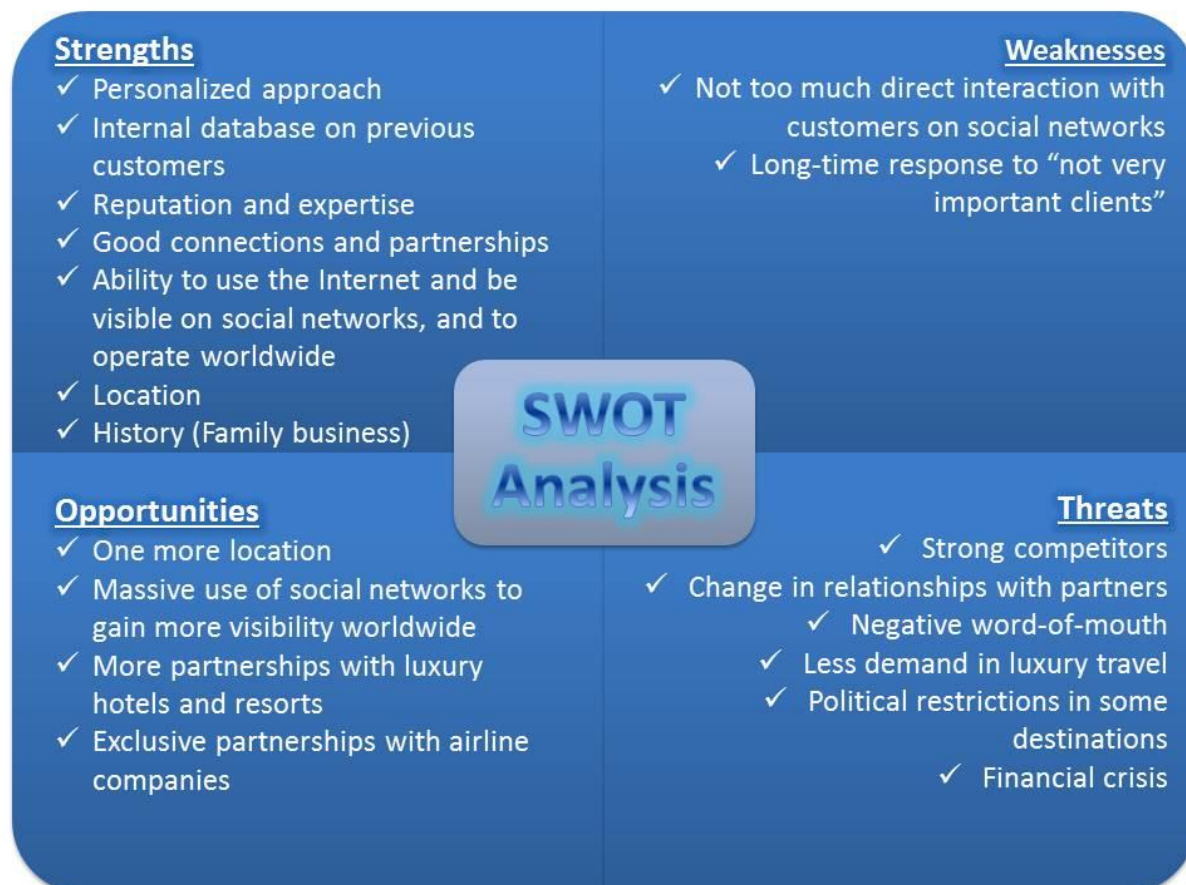


FIGURE 10. SWOT analysis of Renshaw Travel

It is very important to take even small aspect into consideration and pay enough attention to them. If Renshaw Travel is able to emphasize its Strengths and eliminate its Weaknesses, as well as to exploit various Opportunities and foresee Threats, it can continue developing and expanding this industry.

6 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR RENSHAW TRAVEL

Summarizing a thorough analysis of Renshaw Travel, its business operations, and also some of its stakeholders, after a conducted research during the process of writing of this thesis, it is necessary to make some conclusions.

For this thesis we were able to gather an abundant amount of information related to marketing, which, evidently, constructed the backbone of our research. We received insight from the professionals, who excel in this field, making it perceivable for us to distinguish elements online, in digital marketing and social media that carry weight in today's business precepts.

Obviously, Renshaw Travel, as a luxury travel agency, is occupying really good positions in the market. The company has the most crucial partnerships with the world famous chains of luxury hotels, such as Four Seasons Hotels and Resorts, Orient-Express Hotels and Resorts, and the Fairmont Hotels and Resorts. Besides, being a member of Virtuoso, Renshaw Travel automatically shows itself as an exclusive luxury travel agency, which has great privileges and an enviable reputation.

Moreover, Renshaw Travel has its own history, which is one of its advantageous components. People, who created and create this history of Renshaw Travel, are the core of this company, which is a family business. Family business means much more than just expertise and profit, it is about the soul of the company. Renshaw Travel realizes and utilizes this knowledge in every possible aspect of its activities. However, the company's existence nowadays mostly depends on its ability to promote its services in the online world and utilize the Internet opportunities as much as possible.

Renshaw Travel's presence on the most important social networks provides the company with competitive advantage; though, there is still room for development. Obviously, the company is not able to be equally active both in the offline (real) and online worlds with the company size of 11-50 employees. Despite that, Renshaw Travel manages to provide its customers with a high level of luxury service. The company is also trying to emphasize that luxury is not about how you spoil yourself, but it is "the feature that takes you off the mass track onto a track all your own" (Danziger 2005, 255). All in all, Renshaw Travel is moving in the right direction and trying to exploit new opportunities, whenever it is possible.

As for our recommendation for the company, perhaps, Renshaw Travel could get rid of the most unnecessary social media networks, which it has its presence on. It is much better to have fewer networks, but to pay more attention to and focus on them and be able to provide and show the quality as stated by the company. Luxury is not just a word; therefore, it should be visible as a luxury company on those social media.

Marketing is about interaction with customers. It is about communication between a seller and a customer. If there is no such activity, the company cannot remain viable any longer. It is crucial to remember about it in everyday operations. Massive use of the Internet in the XXI century has led to a specific demand from the market, a demand of communication and nice online “package” of the service. One of our recommendations in this area would be to focus more on the social network, which Renshaw Travel has its presence on. It is possible to increase a number of followers and, thus, potential customers. Besides, as an aspect of exclusiveness, we have already suggested a possibility of cooperation with one of the YouTube’s channels, called “Vevo”. It is extremely popular nowadays and focusing mostly on the music industry. This is a good chance for Renshaw Travel to become a pioneer in such activity and to upload videos of a high definition only and to promote its services even better via “Vevo”.

In conclusion, it is worth to mention that Renshaw Travel is showing good results and has a huge potential for the future. The company sticks to its core values and continues improving its operations, while keeping up with the latest changes in the luxury market. It is possible to predict that Renshaw Travel might face some fierce competition in the nearest future, but it is capable to survive and even gain something out of this, having such a great “baggage” of expertise and history behind. The company is on the right track with lots of opportunities for further development.

7 CONCLUDING REMARKS

In addition to the conclusion and recommendations, it is necessary to say that we have done a huge job to gather all the material and to contact some of the required for this thesis company’s stakeholders. Due to time difference and time limits, it was not always an easy thing to do.

As a matter of fact, we have asked four persons, employed by Renshaw Travel, to answer to some questions for our thesis (see APPENDIX 1). Three of them are the Renshaw family members. We have received the replies from three out of four persons. We also sent questions to their competitors asking them to answer to some questions required for our research (see APPENDIX 2). We did not specify the details; however, we mentioned the aim of our research, which was to find out how luxury travel agencies utilize different social media net-

works. We also sent questions to Renshaw Travel's partners asking them to answer to the questions prepared for them (see APPENDIX 3). Since we have not received their replies back, we have to gather the data from other sources.

What comes to some extra work, which was done outside the thesis, it was an interview with the same four persons mentioned above but for another purpose. The respondents were asked questions for Tohology.com, in order to make the interview with luxury travel specialists (see APPENDIX 4). As for this particular thesis, we were able to use just one respondent's reply, which was required to complement the research.

However, we have faced some technical difficulties, when we were writing the thesis, as one of our main data collecting sites, which was e-library of Mikkeli University of Applied Sciences, did not function properly.

As both of us have been attracted by the aspect of marketing before, it seemed natural to en-gross in such a topic, which combined a more niche-type industry as well as the current norm of marketing, the Internet. Of course, we aim that this work will serve us for our future requirements in working life, and that it has helped to hone our skills, but we assembled this material for Renshaw Travel also. One of the members of the thesis team had his internship at Renshaw Travel; therefore, the company choice was quite obvious. We are thankful for their co-operation and hopefully this thesis might offer some fresh perspective on their business practices and inspiring for new, innovative ways to utilize various networks and tools, which the Internet has to offer.

In conclusion, we would like to point out that cooperation with Renshaw Travel in terms of the thesis was quite good, positive and pleasant. We have gained a lot of knowledge and had a chance to practice it, before receiving the results. This is the experience to cherish throughout the lifetime and to remember as an important step in our life.

8 BIBLIOGRAPHY

Abramovich, Giselle May 4 2013. 15 Stats Retailers Should Know About Pinterest. www-page <http://digiday.com/brands/15-stats-retailers-should-know-about-pinterest/>

Ask Encyclopedia October 10 2013. www-page http://www.ask.com/wiki/Hospitality_industry

ask.com www-pages <http://www.ask.com/question/tagged>

Ball, Stephen Jameson & Stephanie 2004. Advances in Hospitality Management Research. Bradford, GBR: Emerald Group Publishing Ltd.

Bisht, N.S. Belwal, Rakesh & Pande, Sweta 2010. Internet Marketing of Tourism. Mumbai, India: Global Media

Business Dictionary. www-page <http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/hospitality-industry.html>

Chaffrey, Dave, Ellis-Chadwick, Fiona, Mayer, Richard & Johnston, Kevin 2009. Internet Marketing: Strategy, Implementation and Practice. Fourth Edition. Edinburgh Gate, Harlow, England: Pearson Education Limited

Charyev, George March 2012. VK: The Russian Facebook. www-page <http://russian.lingualift.com/blog/russian-facebook-rival/>

Christina Cornett: Pinterest, NOT Just for Wedding Planning! February 20 2013 www-pages <http://www.icontact.com/blog/pinterest-not-just-for-wedding-planning/>

Computerhope www-pages <http://www.computerhope.com/jargon/s/stumbleu.htm>

Constantine, Josh February 29 2012. Your Average Facebook Post Only Reaches 12% Of Your Friends. www-page <http://techcrunch.com/2012/02/29/facebook-post-reach-16-friends/>

Cory Janssen: Definition - What does Tumblr mean? www-pages

<http://www.techopedia.com/definition/27517/tumblr>

Cox, Jena Tesse July 25 2011. The Evolution of Luxury Travel. www-page

<http://www.travelagentcentral.com/trends-research/the-evolution-luxury-travel>

Crouch, G. I., Perdue, R. R. & Timmermans, H. J. P. 2004. Consumer Psychology of Tourism, Hospitality and Leisure. Cambridge, MA, USA: CABI Publishing

Curve Communications May 10 2013. The Four C's of Marketing. www-page

<http://www.curvecommunications.com/2013/05/the-four-cs-of-marketing/>

Daniel Nations: What is Yahoo Buzz? www-pages

<http://webtrends.about.com/od/webportals/a/what-yahoo-buzz.htm>

Danziger, Pamela 2005. Let Them Eat Cake: Marketing Luxury to the Masses – As Well As the Classes. Chicago, IL, USA: Dearborn Trade, A Kaplan Professional Company

David McMahon, December 2010 www-pages <http://whatis.techtarget.com/definition/Twitter>

Dean, Ashley February 2009. www-pages <http://whatis.techtarget.com/definition/Facebook>

Diffen www-page http://www.diffen.com/difference/Effectiveness_vs_Efficiency

Economist Intelligence Unit 2013: Global liveability report. www-pages

http://www.eiu.com/site_info.asp?info_name=The_Global_Liveability_Report

eMarketer December 3 2012. Social Media Marketing Can Get Out of Sync with Consumers.

www-page <http://www.emarketer.com/Article/Social-Media-Marketing-of-Sync-with-Consumers/1009515#bfXG4fjxXKzS2HBg.99>

eMarketer June 18 2013a. Social Networking Reaches Nearly One in Four Around the World.

www-pages <http://www.emarketer.com/Article/Social-Networking-Reaches-Nearly-One-Four-Around-World/1009976#KV8yCWPG1VIZ6KH.99>

eMarketer May 13 2013b. Which Social Networks Are Growing Fastest Worldwide?, www-page <http://www.emarketer.com/Article/Which-Social-Networks-Growing-Fastest-Worldwide/1009884>

Foremski, Tom February 21 2012. Is Skype A Social Network? www-page http://www.siliconvalleywatcher.com/mt/archives/2012/02/is_skype_a_soci.php

Fox, Jeffrey J. 2000. How to Become a Rainmaker: The Rules for Getting and Keeping Customers and Clients. Hyperion

Galb, Jim April 7 2013. Four Seasons Reportedly Eyes a Frequent Guest Plan; Executive Travel Magazine. www-page <http://www.executivetravelmagazine.com/blogs/air-travel-news/2013/4/7/four-seasons-reportedly-eyes-a-frequent-guest-plan>

Google Blog, December 6 2012. www-page <http://googleblog.blogspot.fi/2012/12/google-communities-and-photos.html>

Hakola, Ida & Hiila, Ilona 2012. Strateginen ote verkkoon (Strategic hold online). Finland: Sanoma Pro

Hansen, Flemming & Christensen, Sverre 2007. Riis Emotions, Advertising and Consumer Choice. Frederiksberg, Copenhagen, Denmark: Copenhagen Business School Press

Harden, Leland Heyman, Bob 2009. Digital Engagement: Internet Marketing That Captures Customers and Builds Intense Brand Loyalty. Saranac Lake, NY, USA: AMACOM Books

Houghton Mifflin Company 2000 Updated in 2009. The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, Fourth Edition copyright, www-page <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/luxury>

IContact www-pages <http://www.icontact.com/define/flickr/>

IContact www-pages <http://www.icontact.com/define/instagram/>

Jayawardena, Chandana & Teare, Richard 2004. World hospitality and tourism trends. Bradford, GBR: Emerald Group Publishing Ltd

Jones, Susan K. 2008. Business-to-Business Internet Marketing: Seven Proven Strategies for increasing Profits Through Internet Direct Marketing. Gulf Breeze, FL, USA: Maximum Press

Karunakaran, K. 2008. Marketing Management. Mumbai, India: Global Media

Kats, James E. & Rice, Ronald E. 2002. Social Consequences of Internet Use: Access, Involvement, and Interaction. Cambridge, MA, USA: MIT Press

Kelly, Lois January 30 2011. Steve Jobs on corporate soul. www-page
<http://www.foghound.com/blog/2011/01/30/steve-jobs-on-corporate-soul/>

Khan, Matin 2006. Consumer Behaviour and Advertising Management. Daryaganj, Delhi, India: New Age International

Kim, Larry: Outbound Marketing - Traditional Isn't Always Best www-pages
<http://www.wordstream.com/outbound-marketing>

Kotler, Phillip & Keller, Kevin Lane 2006. Marketing Management. Twelfth Edition. Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Pearson Education

Lawler, Ryan October 31 2013. VEVO Relaunches Its Web And Mobile Sites To Streamline Music Video Search And Discovery. www-page <http://techcrunch.com/2013/10/31/vevo-redesign-2013/>

Leake, William Vaccarello & Lauren Ginty, Maura 2012. Complete B2B Online Marketing. Somerset, NJ, USA: Wiley

Magloff, Lisa. Dynamic Pricing Strategy www-pages
<http://smallbusiness.chron.com/dynamic-pricing-strategy-5117.html>

March, Roger & Woodside, Arch G 2005. Tourism Behavior : Travelers' Decisions and Actions. Wallingford, Oxfordshire, GBR: CABI Publishing

Margaret Rouse, January 2013a www-pages <http://searchcio-midmarket.techtarget.com/definition/LiveJournal>

Margaret Rouse, July 2011 www-pages <http://whatis.techtarget.com/definition/Google>

Margaret Rouse, June 2009a www-pages <http://whatis.techtarget.com/definition/LinkedIn>

Mathur Ramesh 2007. International Tourism. Jaipur, India: Global Media

Meyers, Pete 2013. 2012 SEO Industry Survey, www-page <http://moz.com/seo-industry-survey>

Miletsky Jason I. 2009. Principles of Internet Marketing: New Tools and Methods for Web Developers. Boston, MA, USA: Cengage Learning

Oxford Dictionaries www-pages <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/Facebook?q=facebook>

Pinterest, www-pages <https://www.pinterest.com/>

Pointer, Anna December 2009. Playing the Fame Game: the Celebrity Effect on Tourism. <http://www.insights.org.uk/articleitem.aspx?title=Playing%20the%20Fame%20Game:%20the%20Celebrity%20Effect%20on%20Tourism>

Ramdas, Shreesha June 15, 2012. Inbound Versus Outbound Marketing: What's the Fuss? www-pages <http://www.calliduscloud.com/inbound-versus-outbound-marketing-whats-the-fuss/>

Random House Inc. 2013. Random House Dictionary. www-page <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/luxury>

Random House Inc.: Random House Dictionary 2013. www-page
<http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/pilgrimage>

Rouse, Margaret December 2013b. www-page <http://searchcio-midmarket.techtarget.com/definition/Vimeo>

Rouse, Margaret May 2012. www-page <http://searchcio-midmarket.techtarget.com/definition/Vkontakte-VK>

Rouse, Margaret September 2009b. www-page
<http://searchunifiedcommunications.techtarget.com/definition/Skype>

Royne Stafford, Marla 2002. Promotion of services. Bradford, GBR: Emerald Group Publishing Ltd

RT December 14 2012. US Report Slams Russia's Biggest Social Network VKontakte over Copyright Infringement. www-page <http://rt.com/art-and-culture/russian-vkontakte-copyright-infringement-073/>

Ryan, Chris 2003. Aspects of Tourism, 11: Recreational Tourism: Demand and Impacts. Second Edition. Channel View Publications

Sherlekar, S.A. Prasad, K. Nirmala & Victor, S.J. Salvadore 1997. Principles of Marketing. Mumbai, IND Global Media

Sigala, Marianna, Christou, Evangelos & Gretzel, Ulrike 2012. Social Media in Travel, Tourism and Hospitality. Farnham, England: Ashgate Publishing

Solomon, Michael R. Zaichkowsky, Judith L. & Polegato, Rosemary 2010. Consumer Behaviour: Buying, Having, and Being. Fifth Canadian Edition. Bradford, GBR: Pearson Education Canada

Statistic Brain June 18 2013b. Internet Travel Hotel Booking Statistics. www-page
<http://www.statisticbrain.com/internet-travel-hotel-booking-statistics/>

Statistic Brain, May 7 2013a. www-page <http://www.statisticbrain.com/twitter-statistics/>

Statistics Canada August 2013. Travel between Canada and other countries. www-page <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/131017/dq131017c-eng.htm>

Statistics Canada February 25 2011. Tourism and the Centre for Education Statistics. www-page <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/tables-tableaux/sum-som/101/cst01/arts37a-eng.htm>

Sweeney, Susan 2006. 101 Ways to Promote Your Web Site: Filled with Proven Internet Marketing Tips, Tools, Techniques, and Resources to Increase Your Web Site Traffic. Sixth Edition. Jim hoskins

Taylor, Roxanne May 6 2013. Tourism Boon from Celebrities Social Media Use. www-page <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2013-05-03/tourism-boon-from-celebrities-use-of-social-media/4667924>

techterms.com, March 3 2010 www-pages <http://www.techterms.com/definition/linkedin>

techterms.com, March 6 2007 www-pages <http://www.techterms.com/definition/myspace>

The Canadian Press July 23 2013 updated July 24 2013. Vancouver Most Expensive City In Canada: Mercer Survey, www-pages http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/2013/07/23/vancouver-most-expensive-city_n_3639800.html

The Canadian Press July 23 2013. Vancouver is Canada's most expensive city, but it's not in the world's top. www-pages www.theprovince.com

The Dorchester Collection Diamond Club. www-page <http://www.dcdiamondclub.com/login.aspx?rsn=1>

The Huffington Post B.C. June 2 2013. Vancouver Most Expensive City To Live In North America: The Economist. www-pages http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/2013/02/06/vancouver-most-expensive-city-to-live-economist_n_2631806.html

Tourism Industry Blog March 29 2010. www-pages

<http://www.tourismindustryblog.co.nz/2010/03/pricing-strategy-for-tourism-businesses/>

Twitter, www-pages <https://twitter.com/>

Urban Dictionary www-pages <http://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=twitter>

Webopedia www-pages <http://www.webopedia.com/TERM/Y/YouTube.html>

Wilson, Ralph F. May 10 2012. The Six Simple Principles of Viral Marketing. www-page

<http://webmarketingtoday.com/articles/viral-principles/>

Wober, Karl W. 2002. Benchmarking in Tourism and Hospitality Industries. Cambridge, MA, USA: CABI Publishing

www-pages <http://geekdictionary.computing.net/define/twitter>

Young, Antony & Aitken, Lucy 2007. Profitable Marketing Communications. London, GBR: Kogan Page Ltd.

googleblog.blogspot.com

[http:// vk.com](http://vk.com)

<http://instagram.com/about/faq/>

<http://luxuryhorizons.com>

<http://stevejobsdailyquote.com/>

<http://vancouver.ca/>

<http://www.amanresorts.com/>

<http://www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/>

<http://www.blogger.com/home>

<http://www.concordeworldtravel.com/>

<http://www.concordeworldtravelvancouver.ca/>

<http://www.dcdiamondclub.com/l>

<http://www.dorchestercollection.com/>

<http://www.entrepreneur.com/>
<http://www.facebook.com>
<http://www.fairmont.com/>
<http://www.flickr.com>
<http://www.fourseasons.com/>
<http://www.google.com>
<http://www.inspiredretreats.ca>
<http://www.linkedin.com>
<http://www.livejournal.com/>
<http://www.livejournal.com/>
<http://www.macmillandictionary.com/>
<http://www.merriam-webster.com/>
<http://www.msn.com>
<http://www.northsouthtravel.com/>
<http://www.orient-express.com/>
<http://www.pinterest.com>
<http://www.renshawtravelcanada.com/>
<http://www.skype.com>
<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/>
<http://www.stumbleupon.com/terms>
<http://www.thefreedictionary.com/interaction>
<http://www.tohology.com/>
<http://www.twitter.com>
<http://www.vevo.com/>
<http://www.virtuoso.com>
<http://www.winnipegfreepress.com/business/>
<http://www.yahoo.com>
<http://www.youtube.com>
<https://myspace.com/home>
<https://www.tumblr.com/>
www.burstmedia.com
www.globalwebindex.net
www.socialbakers.com
www.statisticbrain.com

Questions for Renshaw Travel (Luxury travel agency) in Vancouver, BC, Canada

Some questions are optional to respond due to the company's private information

Use of the Internet (and social media, in particular) in luxury travel business:

1. What is the audience you are targeting (age, income level, hobbies and interests, location, etc.)?
2. How often do loyal customers return to purchase a new service?
3. What is the frequency of purchases of the service (total per month or week)?
4. According to your data, from which sources do people get the required information about Renshaw Travel? Is it the official website, Facebook, Google, other websites or simply word of mouth?
5. Which social media bring you more new customers and thus profit?
6. What are the preferences of the new customers and of the loyal customers? Do they expect the augmented service as a "standard package" for the next time?
7. Any high profile-customers? (Positive impact on your image from that?)
8. Do you survey your customer satisfaction regularly? How (if applied)?
9. Do you send electronic newsletters? How often (if applied)?
10. Do you apply benchmarking in your operations? If yes, how exactly?
11. How do you develop partnerships with companies that supplement your operations?
How do you choose them? (Geographical conditions, visibility in media, further connections?)
12. What do you believe is the most effective channel online for marketing? (Any social media, etc.?)
13. Has your company improved its visibility with social media networks?
14. Do you see social media networks as a must in the future development of Renshaw Travel? How? With Google+, Facebook, Twitter, or any other?
15. (it was a separate question) Do you use Skype to communicate with your customers? If yes, how much do you rely on it?

Questions for luxury travel agencies in Vancouver, BC, Canada

Some questions are optional to respond due to the company's private information

Use of the Internet (and social media, in particular) in luxury travel business:

1. What is luxury travel in your opinion?
2. What is the most crucial thing (aspect) in this business?
3. Do you and your company use any social media networks? If yes, please, describe briefly which ones and how actively they are used
4. If you use social media in your company's operations, do they help? Do they bring profit to the company? And if yes, which one (social media) bring more profit?
5. Do social media bring new customers to the company?
6. What do you think is the future of the Internet and social media use in particular in luxury travel business's operations?
7. Do you apply benchmarking in your operations? If yes, how exactly?
8. What do you believe is the most effective channel online for marketing? (Any social media, etc.?)
9. Has your company improved its visibility with social media networks?

Questions for luxury hotels and resorts

Some questions are optional to respond due to the company's private information

Use of the Internet (and social media, in particular) in luxury travel business:

1. What is luxury travel in your opinion? And what is the most crucial aspect in this business?
2. Does your hotel/resort use social media to promote its services? If yes, which ones do you make the most emphasis on and which ones bring more profit?
3. (If answered "Yes" previously) What do you believe is the most effective channel for online marketing? Any social media, etc.? And did your company improve its visibility with social media networks?
4. What do you think is the future of the Internet and social media use in particular in luxury travel business's operations?
5. How do you establish relationships with new partners? Do you have any special preferences about your potential business partners?
6. Do you engage in collaborative (online) marketing campaigns with your partners?
7. Do you apply benchmarking in your operations? If yes, how exactly?

Interview for TOHOLOGY.com

Julia Kostina. *F.I.T. Europe, Luxury Hotel Specialist*, Renshaw Travel (Canada)

1. You have lived both in Russia and in Canada. Besides, you have clients from both of these countries. Could you tell what the difference between them (clients) is?
2. The volume of independent travels is growing year by year. Could this, from your point of view, lead to decrease in demand for tourist companies' services?
3. What is "luxury travel" in your opinion?
4. Do you rely on social media a lot? If yes, does it help your business?
5. Could you say a few words about one of your favorite hotels, which Renshaw Travel has partnership with?
6. What is the most difficult thing in your work?

Travel by Canadians to foreign countries, top 15 countries visited (2012)			
	2012		
	Overnight visits		
	Visits	Nights	Spending in country
	thousands		C\$ millions
Country visited			
United States	22,710	194,413	17,490
Mexico	1,598	17,146	1,639
Cuba	1,082	8,947	748
United Kingdom	908	10,955	1,056
Dominican Republic	766	6,704	674
France	729	9,068	942
Italy	375	3,897	480
Germany	345	3,501	311
Mainland China	314	6,445	521
Spain	245	2,615	284
Jamaica	243	2,189	248
Netherlands	223	1,579	158
Hong Kong	197	2,709	211
Republic Of Ireland	179	2,161	205
Australia	159	3,808	329
Source: Statistics Canada, Tourism and the Centre for Education Statistics. Last modified: 2011-02-25.			

Travel by Canadians to foreign countries, top 15 countries visited (2007)			
	2007		
	Overnight visits		
	Visits	Nights	Spending in country
	thousands		C\$ millions
Country visited			
United States	17,759	130,801	11,545
Mexico	1,019	11,146	1,084
United Kingdom	947	11,608	1,149
France	745	9,287	973
Cuba	724	6,136	629
Dominican Republic	690	5,871	599
Germany	370	3,526	323
Italy	352	3,836	514
Netherlands	258	2,094	210
China	258	5,452	455
Spain	187	2,027	246
Hong Kong	177	2,757	209
Republic of Ireland	166	1,787	203
Switzerland	148	1,058	107
Austria	137	761	98
Source: Statistics Canada, Tourism and the Centre for Education Statistics. Last modified: 2011-02-25.			